WORLD / A21

Mel Gibson apologizes to Jews for remarks while being arrested

ENTERTAINMENT / D5

Oscar-winning docu comes to RP as 'Penguin, Penguin, Paano Ka Ginawa?'

NEWS / A4

Nida's aide charged with her murder

METRO / A19

Tulfo brothers accuse Mike A of pressuring RPN-9 to cancel their show

Bichara's testimony at Senate irks Palace

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG IS FUMING OVER THE DEPARTment of Foreign Affairs' failure to rein in Philippine Ambassador to Lebanon Al Francis Bichara who defied a presidential gag order.

Bichara gave his testimony in a telephone phone patch on Monday to a Senate hearing on the lack of funds to repatriate overseas Filipino

BICHARA'S/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, August 3, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 236 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Most advanced robot goes 'lo-bat' in Makati

By Ronnel W. Domingo

EVEN THE WORLD'S most-advanced humanoid robot is not immune to power glitches.

Asimo, Honda's globe-trotting "ambassador of technology,"

MOST/ A9

MAY SPEECH MALFUNCTION!

GMA: Bring home all OFWs

Evacuation of 30,000 workers to cost P2B

By Christine O. Avendaño and Cynthia D. Balana

CITING INTENSIFIED FIGHTing in Lebanon, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the immediate evacuation of all 30,000 Filipinos in the war-torn country.

The President ordered the newly formed Task Force Lebanon headed by Vice President Noli de Castro to undertake the evacuation over the next two weeks. It was expected to cost the government P2 billion.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Ms Arroyo issued the directive because of the uncertainty in the Lebanon conflict.

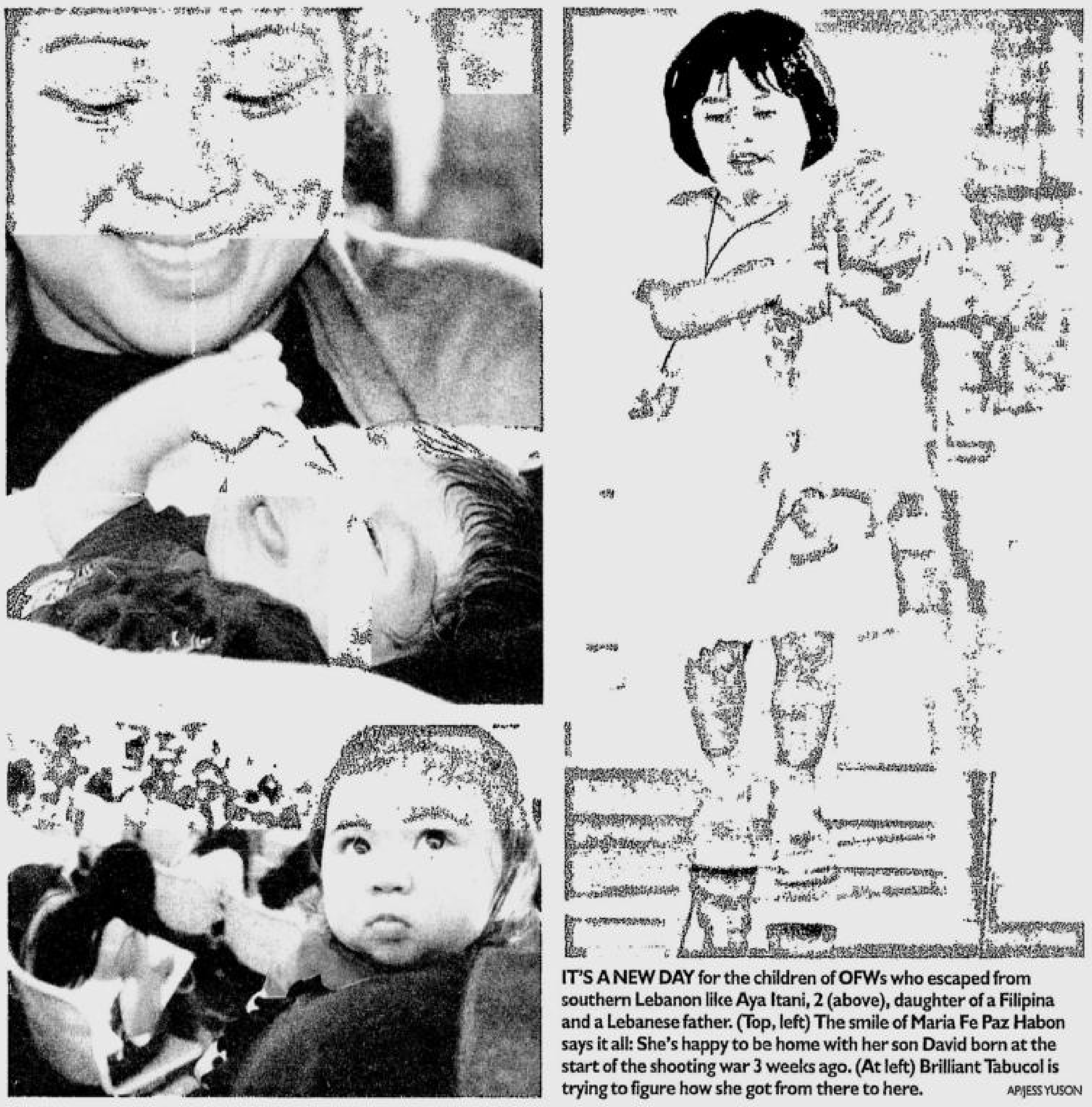
He quoted the President as saying, "We should bring our Filipino compatriots out of harm's way. We should bring them home safely." The President, he said, wants to ensure that there would be "zero casualty" in Lebanon.

Ermita's announcement came after the alert level in Lebanon was raised from 3 to 4—requiring the swift evacuation of Filipinos gathered in relocation centers designated by the Philippine Embassy.

Ermita appealed to families of the OFWs to help the government reach them. "If you can contact them, encourage them to listen to the announcement and the program that the government is undertaking to bring them home safely," he said.

So far, the government has repatriated 2,232 Filipinos in the last two weeks. The

GMA/ A9



IT'S A NEW DAY for the children of OFWs who escaped from southern Lebanon like Aya Itani, 2 (above), daughter of a Filipina and a Lebanese father. (Top, left) The smile of Maria Fe Paz Habon says it all: She's happy to be home with her son David born at the start of the shooting war 3 weeks ago. (At left) Brilliant Tabucol is trying to figure how she got from there to here. AP/JESS YUSON

Fighting escalates; Israel nixes ceasefire

BEIRUT, LEBANON—AFTER A brief lull in deadly air strikes, all signs point to an escalation of the three-week-old war:

The ferocity of the battles between Hezbollah guerrillas and 10,000 Israeli troops on five fronts across southern Lebanon, the heavy barrage of rocket fire into northern Israel, the determination of Israel to keep fighting, and the minimal diplomatic progress toward a ceasefire.

Israel launched its deepest ground strike into Lebanon on Wednesday, claiming it had killed 10 Hezbollah guerrillas and captured five in the northeastern city of Baalbek. Nearby air strikes killed more than a dozen civilians, some of them children.

Following the Israeli prime minister's vow to step up the offensive until a strong international force arrived, Israeli warplanes also attacked a Lebanese Army base in south Lebanon and killed three soldiers.

Hezbollah guerrillas hit back, firing a heavy barrage of at least 84 rockets at towns across northern Israel, wounding at least seven people and setting off fires. The barrage marked a sharp increase in Hezbollah attacks after a two-day lull.

And in the deepest strike into

FIGHTING/ A10

'We slept with dog, ate leftovers for $200/month'

By Nikko Dizon

IN THEIR EMPLOYER'S MANSION IN Lebanon, they slept in a little room with a huge dog and a turtle, ate leftovers and worked from daybreak until midnight so they could earn $150 to $200 a month to send to their families in the Philippines.

"We never experienced anything like that here. We were really treated like paupers," Darren Legaspi said hours after she flew home in a flight arranged by the US-funded International Organization for Migration that ferried 447 Filipinos from Lebanon early yesterday.

Legaspi recounted to the INQUIRER the ordeal she, Remedios Sampiano and two other Filipinos experienced in that wealthy Lebanese family's household for 10 months.

That their contracts were not being followed by their Lebanese employers was a common grievance shared by the returning overseas Filipino workers with the media.

"They'd make you clean their children's houses, their parents' houses. In

WE SLEPT/ A9

Palace: It's hard to say what we can do in 10 weeks

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Luige A. del Puerto

A DAY AFTER PRESIDENT MACApagal-Arroyo set a 10-week deadline for law enforcers to produce results on the unabated political killings, Malacañang refused to commit to specific goals or objectives to fulfill her directive.

"It's hard to say what we can do, say in 10 weeks. We have objectives, but we can't say we can cut this within 50 percent," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said in an interview yesterday with reporters.

Even Task Force Usig, the government body formed to look into the executions, was only willing to promise "best effort."

Ermita noted that the task force did not set specific targets that would serve as a yardstick for how well it was doing its jobs.

Said Task Force Usig in a report: "[We pledge our] commitment to uphold the rule of law and observance and protection of human rights, to exert [our] best effort to ensure that most recent incidents of killings or attempts against the safety of militant groups and party-list members, media personalities,

PALACE/ A8

Iron fist for Rangers, kid gloves for Marines

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

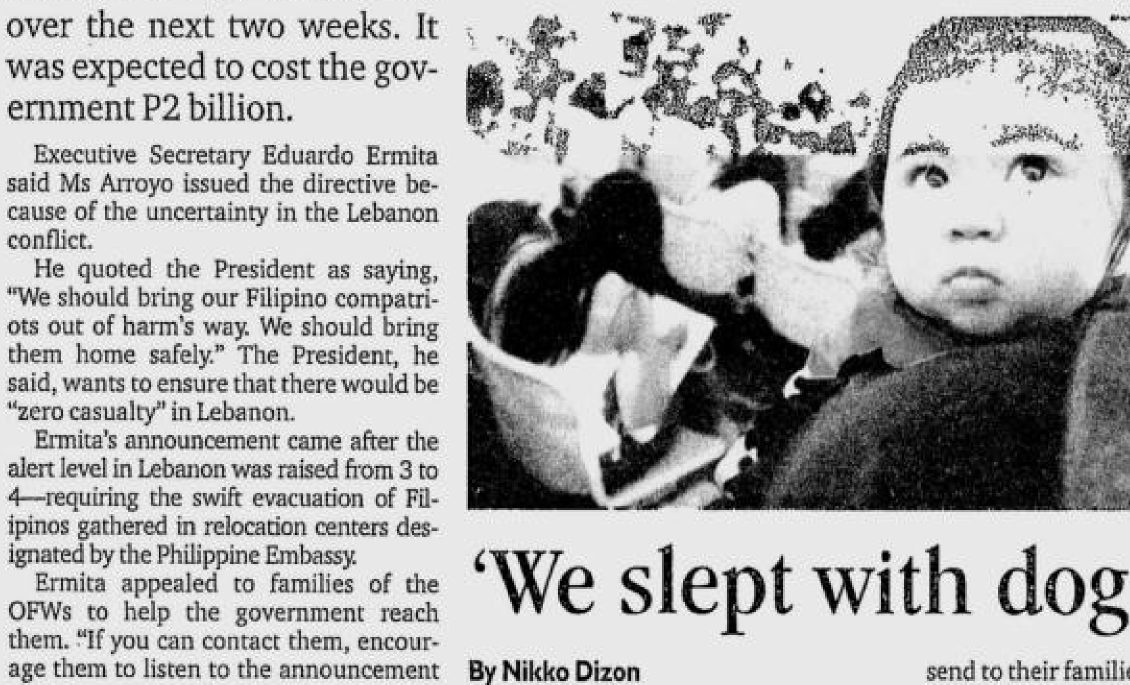
A "DOUBLE STANDARD" APpears to be in place for officers of two elite military units—the Marines and the Scout Rangers—facing court-martial for the purported coup plot of Feb. 24.

And a gag order has been imposed, with Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez saying investigators looking into the supposed plot were barred from speaking about the subject.

"They are not authorized to speak," Gonzalez told reporters. "We don't want to have a chorus of voices which may not coincide with each other. Each one has his own interpretation of a story, or makes an interpretation of a statement. That's not good."

Nine of the 13 Marine officers linked to the purported plot casually showed up at yesterday's pre-

IRON FIST/ A8



WHAT ROAD?
In its wake, storm "Henry" hit most of Central Luzon over the last 48 hours, flooding 34 barangays of Moncada, Tarlac, particularly Barangay Camangaan, where residents were forced to flee their homes and newly planted ricefields were destroyed. TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

GMA men, foes meet in secret dialogue

By Christian V. Esguerra

A DIALOGUE QUIETLY ORGAnized by Malacañang earlier this week got a familiar response—resolve the legitimacy crisis of the Arroyo administration first.

The occasion was the "dialogue session" facilitated by Adam Kahane, an expert in "design and facilitation processes that help diverse groups of people work together to sense and actualize emerging futures." It was strictly a closed-door session, said the INQUIRER source.

The source, a former member of the academe, said Malacañang was so bent on keeping the two-day gathering under wraps that participants were all told never to talk about it to the media.

The dialogue involved some 30 politicians, and business and religious leaders, including Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales and Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, one participant yesterday said the gathering on Sunday and Monday at the Magsaysay Center in Manila identified the five "most serious" problems of the country—livelihood, fund mobilization, peace and order, education, and legitimacy of the Arroyo administration.

GMA MEN/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer news name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

A1

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The western sections of Northern and Central Luzon will experience occasional monsoon rains and the coastal waters along these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

COMPILED BY LAW DE GUZMAN, PDI RESEARCH/08/02/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Cloudy with Rains	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Cloudy with Rains	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

'Make killings an int'l issue'

By Luige A. del Puerto

A POLITICAL SCIENTIST WHO SUGGESTED that the unabated killing of leftist activists might be part of state policy has come up with a four-point response to help check the murders. (*See story on Page A1*)

The response includes challenging in forums the national security directions being adopted by the government, raising awareness about the assassinations in the international community, holding forums aimed at scrutinizing the national security policy, and seeking dialogues with key officials executing this policy.

"A saturation point where government will see that it will ultimately lose politically on the domestic and international fronts if it continues to follow this security track needs to be reached soon in order to stop this bloodletting," Prof. Miriam Coronel Ferrer said in an article e-mailed to the INQUIRER.

United Nations

On the international front, Ferrer said peace and human rights activists should bring the killings to the attention of the United Nations.

Locally, communities can be asked to issue statements condemning the murders, she said.

"[We should] generate more provincial or localized responses such as the publicized statement, 'We thirst for peace,' in Bulacan. Contacts in provinces where most victims came from should be encouraged to draw up similar responses," she said.

"Meanwhile, other provinces should also be asked to issue 'preventive' statements, where they ask that their localities be spared from these violations," she said.

Balancing act

Ferrer suggested a "balancing of 'case-specific' and 'big picture' responses."

She added: "On the former, support groups can be formed for each case or similar set of cases. On the latter, more forums can be held looking at the national security policy of the government.

"These forums can be organized singly or jointly by the academe, NGOs (nongovernment organizations), lawyers groups, and peace and human rights coalitions.

"The government's national security directions should be seriously challenged."

Ferrer urged peace advocates to:

- Write an open letter to the UN on the fact of the Philippines being elected to the Human Rights Council amid all the killings and call on the government to make good its pledges to this body.
- Request meetings or dialogues with foreign embassies, the Executive Secretary, the military and police, the defense department, and the National Security Council on this concern.

Ferrer teaches the politics and history of Southeast Asia at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

She was earlier sought by the INQUIRER to comment on how the Philippines' neighbors had dealt with and crushed communist insurgencies in their respective territories.

PRESIDENT Arroyo sniffs at the Mussaenda Gloria Macapagal Arroyo. LYN RILLON

Cute, petite plant named after GMA

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday got an unexpected wedding anniversary gift, and it did not come from her husband.

But First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo was by her side as an ornamental hybrid plant that was named after the Chief Executive was given to her by officials of the University of the Philippines in a ceremony at Malacañang.

The President was all smiles as the Mussaenda "Gloria Macapagal Arroyo," an ornamental shrub "with one or more of its sepals developing into a large, colorful petaloid structure," was presented to her by UP officials.

"It fits the President," Dr. Teresita Rosario, the plant's breeder and horticulture professor at UP Los Baños, said of features of the shrub which she said had "petite and cute" petaloids.

Rosario said that President Arroyo gushed when she saw the hybrid plant and told her it was beautiful.

She said mussaendas or donas are a favorite of landscapers and that the new hybrid plant named after President Arroyo would probably be priced at more than P1,000 when made available in the market.

Mussaenda Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is the first mussaenda named after a Philippine President.

Rosario said that the new hybrid plant had been registered with the National Seed Industry Council of the Department of Agriculture.

While a mussaenda hybrid plant had also been named after President Corazon Aquino, Rosario said that this had yet to be presented to the former president by its breeder.

In a brochure and statement provided to reporters, UP Los Baños said that mussaenda hybrids were first bred in UPLB in 1948 by Dr. Dioscoro Umali, former dean of agriculture.

"Continuous crossing and backcrossing resulted in several colorful hybrids that were named after Philippine first ladies as well as those that were given Filipino names such as Diwata, Paraluman, Lakambani and Maria Clara," the university statement said.

Indeed, mussaenda hybrids were named after President Arroyo's mother Evangelina.

Other first ladies who got the same privilege include Imelda Marcos, Leonila Garcia (wife of President Carlos Garcia), Luz Magsaysay (wife of President Ramon Magsaysay), Alicia Quirino (wife of President Elpidio Quirino), Trining Roxas (wife of President Manuel Roxas), Esperanza Osmeña (wife of President Sergio Osmeña), Aurora Quezon (wife of President Manuel Quezon), and Hilaria Aguinaldo (wife of President Emilio Aguinaldo).

NDF offers to join probe of killings

THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC Front has proposed that it conduct a joint probe with the government into the growing number of enforced disappearances leftists and alleged communist rebels.

The NDF, the political arm of the Communist Party of the Philippines, also proposes that representatives from the Norwegian government and the International Committee of the Red Cross join the fact-finding missions, said Fidel Agcaoili, the chair of the NDF committee on human rights.

Norway has been serving as mediator in the ongoing peace negotiations between the government and the communist insurgents.

Agcaoili said a joint probe would determine the facts surrounding the disappearances and find the victims "whether dead or alive."

"Witnesses to the abductions have identified military and police agents as the perpetrators of these dastardly acts. Despite determined efforts by relatives and friends to locate the victims, including filing judicial petitions for habeas corpus, they have remained missing as of this date," the NDF said in a statement.

Agcaoili made the proposal in a letter to his government counterpart, Sedfrey Candelaria, head of the government panel in the joint monitoring committee of the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

Among the abductions that Agcaoili cited were those of suspected members of the New People's Army— Philip Limjoco, Roberto Marapo, Rogelio Calubad, Leopoldo Ancheta and Prudencio Calubid, and their companions.

Agcaoili also cited the disappearance of University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeno, who were abducted with peasant leader Manuel Merino by six armed men last June 26. *Norman Bordadora*

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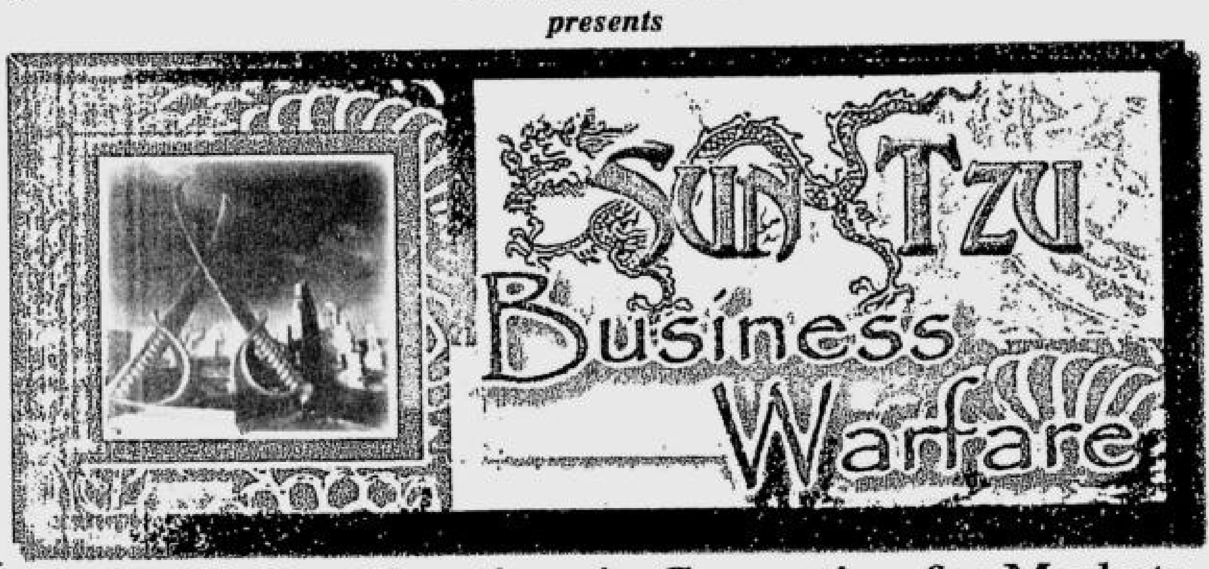

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RESTIVE MAYON

Lava threatens villages

LEGAZPI CITY—MAYON VOLCANO'S MAIN lava flow along the Mabinit channel was barely 100 aerial meters away from the 6-km permanent permanent danger zone boundary yesterday, posing a fire hazard to crops and vegetation in the villages of Mabinit and Bonga, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

The front of the main lava trail, which on closer view is almost as tall as a four-story building, was reported to be 5.9 aerial km from the crater now, or almost 2 km farther than that of the 2001 eruption.

"Areas that will be engulfed by the lava flow will be barren for quite a long time and cannot be tilled by farmers because the lava will harden into rocks. It is unavoidable that there will be a devastation of some existing vegetation at the volcano's slopes and foot," said Alex Baloloy, a research analyst at Phivolcs-Legazpi.

As of March, there were 4,343 farmers planting crops for a living within the 6-km permanent danger zone, the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office reported.

Baloloy said the villages of Bonga and Mabinit are around 8.5 aerial km away from the crater, and it would take some time for unabated lava flow to reach the residential zones.

But he said the danger of fire engulfing houses in very dry areas of the two villages was always there, particularly if the lava flow, which is at least 300 Celsius, or three times the boiling point of water at standard pressure, advances 2.5 km more.

After the 2001 eruption, the Department of Agriculture here estimated damage to crops at more than P8.5 million.

Meanwhile, Mt. Mayon's sulfur dioxide emissions remained "high" at 7,050 tons per day, Phivolcs reported yesterday.

There were 450 tremor episodes compared to Tuesday's reported 354 episodes because of large lava blocks breaking on impact at the volcano's slopes.

There were 16 volcanic earthquakes detected, indicating ongoing magma intrusion and ascent toward the crater.

Phivolcs warned residents of Mabinit, Bonga, Matatanag and Buyoan villages in this city and Miisi village in Daraga, Albay to be alert and prepared for evacuation if the volcanic activity escalates.

These villages are all located at the volcano's southeast quadrant where lava flows mainly occur. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon*

Palace denies being media choosy

By Gilc C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY SAID THAT President Macapagal-Arroyo was accessible to both friendly and critical media outlets amid criticisms she has been very selective in her choice of which broadcast station or print media she would grant a rare interview.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said he doubted allegations that the President was deliberately choosing media outlets that were less critical of her administration.

"There is no standing order from the President for us to pick only friendly media outlets in her interviews," said Ermita.

When she was recently hospitalized for flu, President Arroyo requested that "some reporters" be sent to her room as she wanted to give the public a first-hand look at her health condition.

Both Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Presidential Management Staff Head Arthur Yap had announced that the interview would be done by one television reporter and a broadsheet journalist randomly selected from the media pool covering Malacañang to avoid crowding the President's hospital room.

After the interview, the chosen reporters would then share their notes and footage with other reporters.

But when the interview was set, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye decided that only one reporter from the Philippine Star and a cameraman from the state-owned television station NBN-4 would be allowed access to the President's suite.

Bunye justified his decision to give Philippine Star exclusive access to the President because its publisher, Max Soliven, had personally requested it and that it was meant to make up for the President's failure to attend the newspaper's anniversary that same night.

House defies Palace, names Rep. Teves to ways and means committee

DESPITE PALACE RESERVATIONS, THE House of Representatives on Tuesday elected Negros Oriental Rep. Herminio Teves as the new chair of its powerful committee on ways and means.

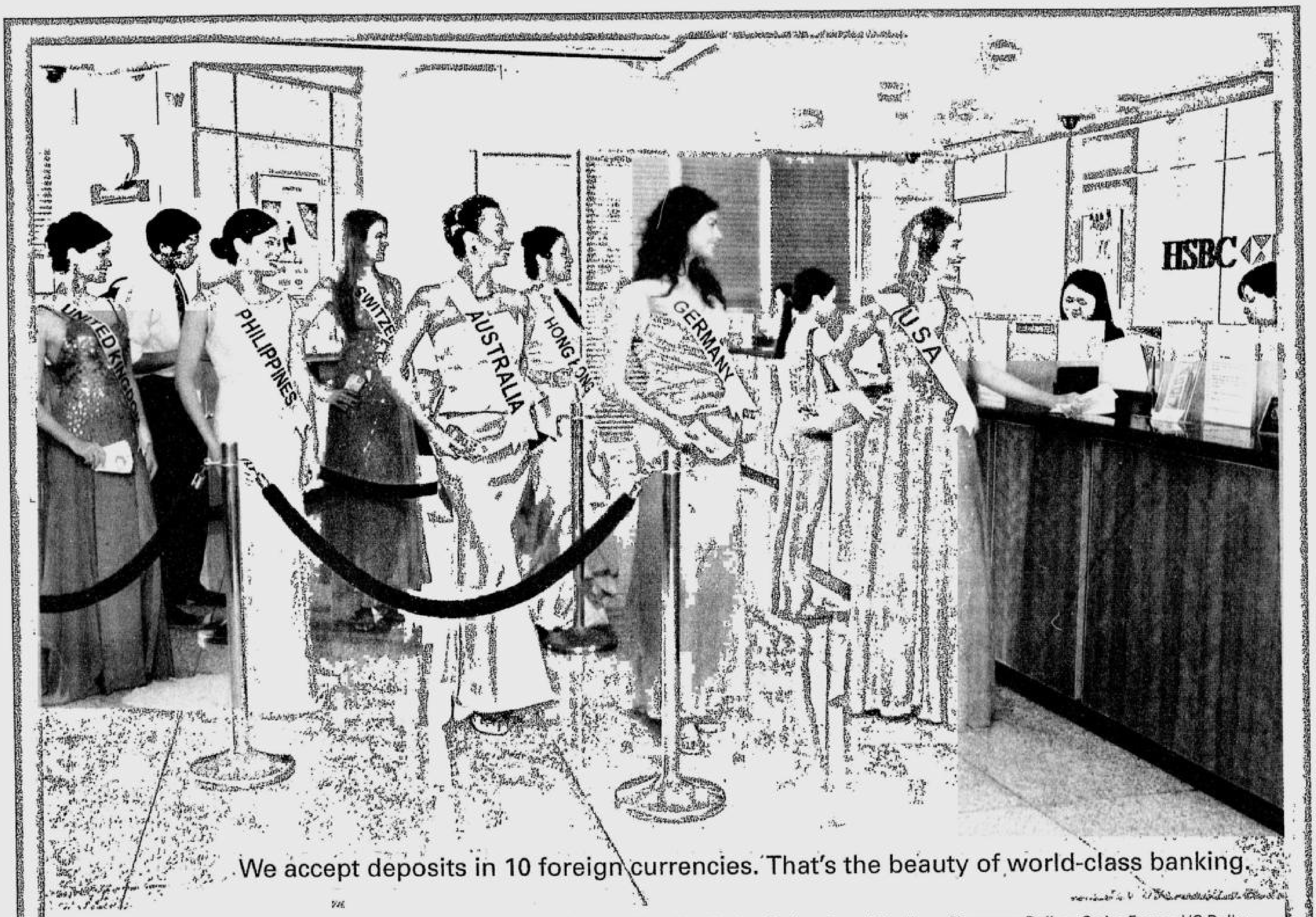
The House voted to elect Teves as chair of the committee and Antique Rep. Exequiel Javier as vice chair. Teves replaced former Tarlac Rep. Jesli Lapus, whom the President had appointed as the new Department of Education chief.

"Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my deep gratitude for finally giving me the opportunity to serve the House of Representatives and the country as chairman of the committee on ways and means," Teves said after his election.

Teves, who has been senior vice chair of the committee for the past few years, had been in line to succeed Lapus as committee chair based on a power-sharing deal they struck in 2004.

But on July 22, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said Malacañang was not too keen about Teves taking over the committee since his son, Margarito, is the Secretary of Finance.

Philip C. Tubeza



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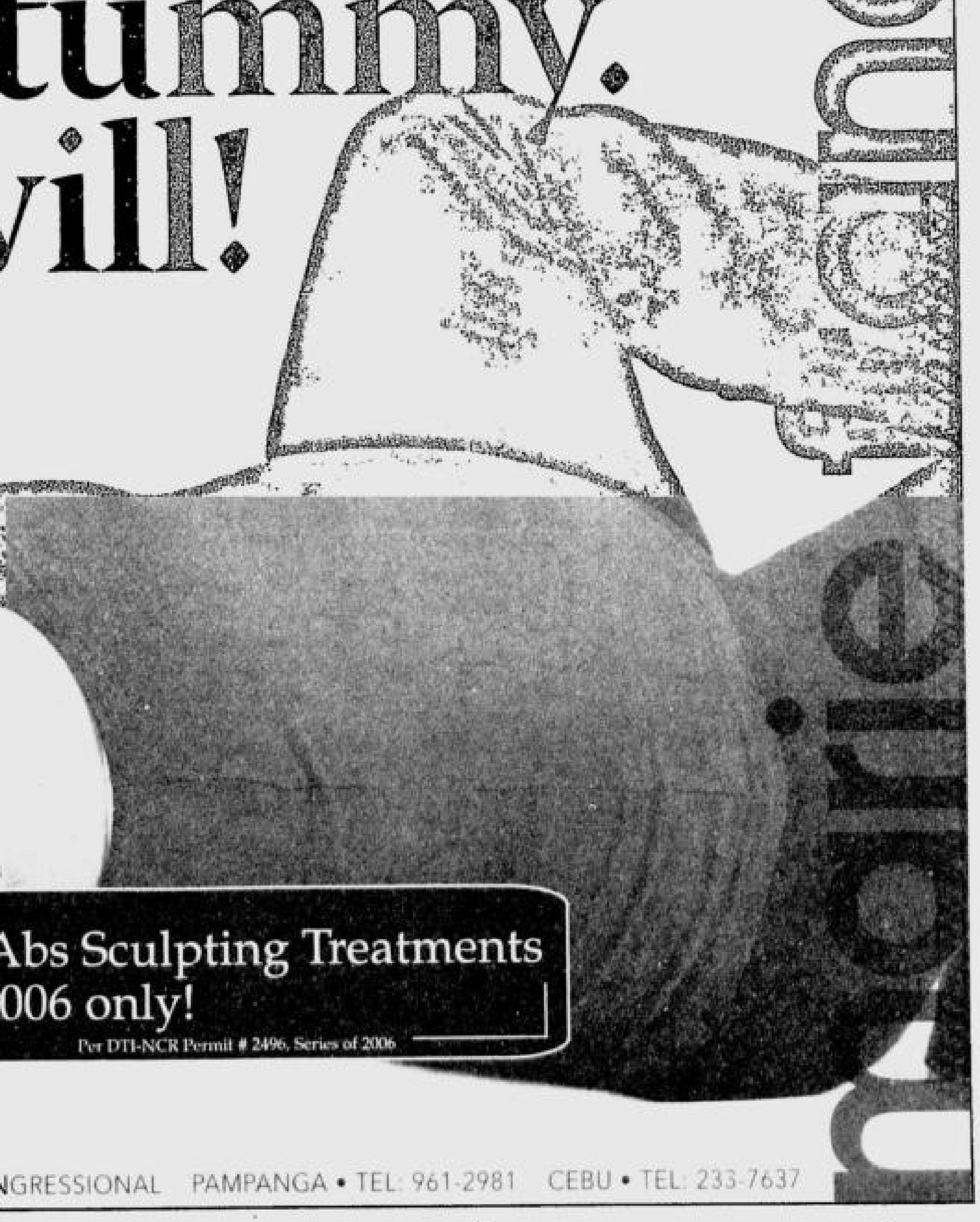

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Erap files libel suit vs ex-beauty queen, ma

By Norman Bordadora

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada yesterday filed a P30 million libel suit against a former beauty queen, the latter's mother and a national broadsheet in connection with a series of stories that alleged he had used her signatures to launder ill-gotten funds.

Prosecutors had to go to Estrada's Tanay vacation estate where he is on "house arrest" to get the ex-President's sworn complaint affidavit against former Binibining Pilipinas runner-up Joelle Pelaez, her mother Blanquita and the Manila Standard newspaper.

The Sandiganbayan antigraft court had rejected Estrada's petition for a pass so he could file the libel complaint before the Rizal provincial court.

"In all my public and private life, I have never done or participated in any forgery, falsification of any document, money laundering or seduction," Estrada said in his complaint affidavit.

Estrada swore he didn't have anything to do with the business transactions entered into by Pelaez with the United Coconut Planters' Bank and San Miguel Corp.

Pelaez had alleged in the articles that appeared in the Manila Standard that Estrada and his cronies used the transactions with these companies to launder more than P2 billion just before he was impeached in late 2000.

"I likewise have never seduced this Joelle Pelaez to become my mistress and neither have I invited her to any place or offered her any gift or anything to seduce her to become my mistress or for whatever purpose," he added.

Pelaez alleged in the Manila Standard articles that Estrada had tried to seduce her into becoming his mistress by giving her very expensive gifts, including allegedly directing the UCPB to grant her a multi-million peso loan and SMC to give her a beverage dealership.

She said that Estrada and his cronies used her specimen signatures in the documents covering these business transactions to open a bank account that was in turn allegedly used to launder money.

Pelaez followed her allegations with a criminal complaint against Estrada, SMC president Ramon Ang and several other SMC and UCPB officials before the Makati City prosecutors' office.

In his counter-affidavit, Estrada denied lavishing Pelaez with expensive presents, including a P2 million gift, using his then crony Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis Singson.

But he admitted having met Pelaez on several occasions during which she allegedly interceded for her mother Blanquita who was supposedly having a hard time with the Philippine National Police, then headed by Panfilo Lacson, concerning a deal to purchase handcuffs.

Estrada said he could not do anything about the deal falling through because Blanquita allegedly failed to comply with certain contractual obligations.

97 teachers pass workshop

NINETY-SEVEN TEACHERS RECENTLY hurdled a series of workshops in the weeklong "Road to Excellence" program of the Centex Foundation in partnership with the Meralco Management and Leadership Development Center (MMLDC).

The highlights of the annual training session provided by Centex were sessions on math and science, two of the most challenging school subjects to teach.

The math module was presented by two math professors of the University of the Philippines, Dr. Jose Maria P. Balmaceda and Dr. Marian P. Roque.

The teachers who took part in the training program were from Centex-Manila, Centex-Batangas, Buklod Bahayan, Food for the Hungry Minds and AFP Preschool.

Under the partnership, the MMLDC provided the facilities, accommodations, materials and courses. This is in line with one of its missions, to help develop socially responsible leaders in education.

"The education sector is a primary beneficiary of the MMLDC, and we are very honored to be the venue of this noteworthy event," Vivien Arnobit, MMLDC director for academic services, said in a statement.

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'Tita' is innocent, says Nida's daughter

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE DAUGHTER OF SLAIN MOVIE ACTRESS Nida Blanca yesterday disputed the government's findings on her mother's long-time assistant and asked the Department of Justice to withdraw charges against Elena de la Paz as an alleged accessory in her mother's death.

In a letter to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Kaye Torres said the inclusion of De la Paz in the murder charge was "a crime in itself."

Character witness

She said De la Paz could not have committed what she is being accused of, which is that she allegedly helped to ensure that Blanca would be with the other suspects shortly before her death.

Torres also offered to stand as a character witness for De la Paz "though I am aware that doing this may weaken the case for the prosecution."

She vowed to do everything to help De la Paz, who she said was innocent, and also denounced the witness who implicated her in the murder.

"How can I expect the the DOJ to give justice to my late mother with this kind of injustice being done to Tita Elena. We cannot solve a crime by committing another crime," Torres said in her letter which she delivered to Gonzalez yesterday.

Torres said that while she was appreciative of the DOJ's efforts to solve the murder, she could not support its case against De la Paz and that she wanted her mother's killing to be solved "truthfully, honestly and accurately."

Credibility doubted

"I surely cannot allow an innocent person to be charged and arrested for a crime she didn't commit. This is not the kind of justice my mother would want," she said.

Last week, state prosecutors filed an amended information before the Pasig Regional Trial Court in which De la Paz was included as an accessory in the murder case against Blanca's husband Rod Strunk, Pedro Philip Medel Jr., Mike Martinez, Galileo Kintanar and a Jane Doe.

No bail was recommended for their release.

In her letter, Torres cast doubt on the credibility of witness Ranny Francisco, who had identified De la Paz as the woman who was with two men who had fetched Blanca from the Atlanta Centre in San Juan several hours before the actress was found dead in her car on Nov. 7, 2001.

She said that during the time when Francisco was supposed to have seen De la Paz, the latter was at home with Torres' grandmother, the grandmother's nanny and a friend of the family identified as Bernard Fernandez.

More than a sister

She also said the family cook and gardener, Praxedes Firaza and Anghel Firaza, could prove her statement.

"This, too, my grandmother has told me repeatedly whenever we would talk about my mother's murder case," she said.

She said De la Paz had been loyal and dedicated to her family for 45 years, and loved her mother as "more than a sister and a best friend."

"Throughout the years, we have grown to love, trust and respect Tita Elena, as she became an important part of our family, and never was there a time in those 45 years when she had been guilty of any wrong-doing or any sinful act or behavior towards my mother or any family member," she said.

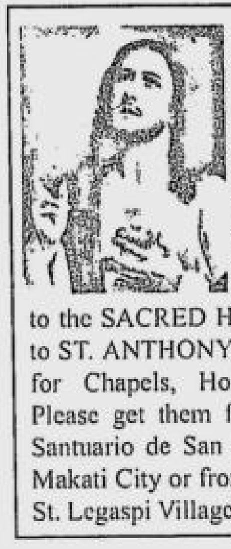
Withdrawn from the case

Sought for a reaction, Gonzalez said Torres' position was not binding on the department and the prosecution panel.

He said he would decide on Torres' request within 10 days.

Gonzalez also said that as long as the trial proper was not yet over, there was still a chance for De la Paz to be withdrawn from the case.

But that might also have an adverse effect on the case, he added.



IMPORTANT
To the Devotees of the SACRED HEART OF JESUS. Tomorrow, August 4, 2006 is the FIRST FRIDAY of the month. Novenas and Statutes to the SACRED HEART OF JESUS and to ST. ANTHONY are given away FREE for Chapels, Hospitals, Schools, etc. Please get them from JASMINE at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City or from Beny at 170 Salcedo St. Legaspi Village, Makati City..

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BIR insists it hit 6-month goal of P301B

SAN PEDRO HOUSING
A socialized housing project in Barangay Landaya, San Pedro, Laguna will soon rise as Federico Laxa, general manager Federico Laxa of the National Housing Authority (center) and Rep. Uliran Joaquin (second from left) exchange copies of the Memorandum of Agreement they signed for the project. The intended beneficiaries are qualified homeless families in the area. The NHA shall be responsible in the cost collection/recovery efforts. Looking on are NHA officials Susan Nonato, Virginia Domingo, and Ray Abad.

THE BUREAU ON INTERNAL Revenue yesterday insisted that it exceeded its six-month collection goal of P300.877 billion, claiming that it collected P302.028 billion, which would make it ahead by P1.15 billion, or 0.38 percent.

The BIR issued a statement to clarify the nature of the collections made and why the failure to meet the P321.2 billion "cumulative collection target" from January to June, or a shortfall of P3 billion, should not be taken against the agency.

The BIR said the difference of P16.363 billion actually came from the shortfall of the Bureau of Treasury.

"The BIR does not take [an] active part in the auction of T-bills and T-bonds since the undertaking belongs to the BTR," it said.

"However, a monthly tax goal from the sale of these reserves is set just the same for the BIR," it added.

The revenue agency said the 2006 first-half collection from BIR operations—which improved significantly from the 2005 collection of P243.8 billion by P58 billion—did not include tax remittances from the sale or auction of T-bills and T-bonds by the BTR.

It said the agency's collection goal from T-bills and T-bonds had been set at P20.3 billion for the first six months of 2006.

However, the BTR reported a total tax take of only P16.363 billion, or a deficit of P3.985 billion.

For June alone, the BTR reported a tax take of P2.338 billion, against the target of P3.024 billion, or a deficit of P686 million, the BIR said.

"Without the taxes from the T-bills and considering BIR operations alone, the BIR is ahead of the target by P1.151 billion. With the Treasury's shortfall of P3.985 billion, the collection is short of the goal by P2.834 billion," it said. *Cynthia D. Balana*

DILG chief orders child offenders transferred

By Norman Bordadora

INTERIOR SECRETARY RONALDO PUNO has ordered the transfer of minor offenders languishing in Metro Manila jails to a new and appropriate facility inside Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan area in Taguig.

Puno said the "children in conflict with the law" facility in Taguig and two new jails for persons facing drug-related cases in Laguna and Cebu are already close to completion.

"I have already ordered the BJMP (Bureau of Jail Management and Penology) to immediately transfer all CICL still detained in city and municipal jails all over Metro Manila to the youth facility in Bicutan," Puno said.

"The two new jails in Laguna and Cebu, on the other hand, are expected to help decongest our district, municipal and city jails in these provinces, because each of these four-storey facilities can conveniently accommodate from 600 up to 900 inmates facing drug-related charges," he added.

Puno said the completion of the CICL facility in Taguig was in compliance with a new law ordering the segregation of juvenile offenders from adult prisoners and their rehabilitation and eventual release to the custody of their parents or guardians.

The new jails for persons involved in drug-related cases, on the other hand, is in line with heightened government efforts to improve the conditions of inmates and address the worsening problem of jail overcrowding.

Puno said the three new facilities under the administration of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology were built with the help of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office which provided a P100-million support fund for the facilities.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, August 3, 2006
17th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Jer 18:1-6
Gospel: Matthew 13:47-53

Jesus said to the crowds, "The kingdom of heaven is like a big fishing net let down into the sea, in which every kind of fish has been caught. When the net is full, it is dragged ashore. Then they sit down and gather the good fish in buckets, but throw the worthless ones away. That is how it will be at the end of time; the angels will go out to separate the wicked from the just and throw them into the blazing furnace, where they will weep and gnash their teeth."

Jesus asked, "Have you understood all these things?" "Yes," they answered. So he said to them, "You will see that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom is like a householder who can produce from his store things both new and old."

When Jesus had finished these parables, he left the place.

Commentary

Jeremiah is sent to a potter to watch him throw a pot on the wheel. Often it turns out badly and he takes it from the wheel and begins again. This is God with his people; we are clay in his hand and God is trying to make us into something pleasing. Jesus tells stories of people, now caught in a dragnet, with all sorts of other debris as well. Time for sorting and judging, keeping and throwing away. And a good disciple is one who can go into a storeroom and take what is good and leave the rest. We are to learn how to sort, discard, and take up what is essential. Justice, forgiveness, mercy, truthfulness, faithfulness.

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LCF unveils roadmap for doing good

RP business pushes education as national priority

YOU CAN easily tell how Joachim Von Amsberg feels about companies that help poor Filipinos bridge the education divide by the title of his speech: "Social investment is not charity - it's good business."

In a speech before the League of Corporate Foundations, the World Bank country director for the Philippines had no vacuous praises usually reserved for corporate do-gooders. His message to Corporate Philippines was direct and his challenge intriguing: bring underprivileged Filipinos to school and business will get better.

"Education...can contribute to the development of stronger public institutions, to a better investment climate and therefore make a possibly even more important contribution to the overall development of a society, of an economy and of a country," Amsberg says.

"Obviously, social investments are good for the direct beneficiaries--the poor--but what I want to emphasize is, it's actually good for the growth of the entire country and the entire population," he adds.

Amsberg's statements may read like a tedious, academic speech heard too often from government officials. But it definitely is not an empty one. A loan of 200 million dollars for the Department of Education's National Program Support for Basic Education, its biggest loan to the country in seven years, saw to that

"The education sector is the one sector where we wanted to make the largest investment in the Philippines at this particular time," Amsberg says.

The reason for this massive investment in education is clear. Amsberg believes social investment especially in education will solve a paradox so unique to the Philippines and heavily felt by majority of Filipinos in their every day lives.

WORLD BANK COUNTRY DIRECTOR JOACHIM VON AMSBERG: "Social investment matters."

The paradox unfolds this way: the Philippines is a rich country with a lot of poor people.

"The Philippines is a country that has world class companies assembled today, a country that has some world class cities, a country that clearly has world class people and has clearly the opportunity to become and to be one of the fastest growing, more dynamic economies in the world -- and yet over the decades has not yet lived up to its potential," Amsberg says.

This paradox has led to an inequality trap that snare too many Filipinos. Once Filipinos get caught, they get pinned down for life -- as well as their children and their children's children.

Such a vicious circle ensures that the rich get richer and more get poorer. Amsberg says this uneven distribution of wealth causes the country to suffer from weak public institutions.

"The high concentration of resources means that public institutions that have been captured by specific interest groups and have very hard time serving the common good," the World Bank official says.

Success stories. Amsberg says the Philippine story is not all gloom and doom. There are success stories that can make the country proud, like when it brought down the responsibility for educational management down to the school level. The way the government and the private sector passed down the resources to those who know the challenges best-those who were with the kids everyday, who were in the school.

When the government and the private sector empowered the communities to influence the ways schools are run and schools are maintained using their resources - these are just some of the success stories, Amsberg says

To successfully erase the paradox, government and their private sector partners need to focus not merely on poverty reduction, but on social equity. Corporate Philippines can do that best in the education sector.

The CSR Roadmap. Getting rid of this paradox will be no small feat. That is common knowledge. What is not is how corporations can get more Filipino children to enroll in school, build more schools and provide more books, for every peso that they shell out.

The LCF has responded with a road map that seeks to make education a national priority. You will see no direction signs and curving roads in this roadmap, but it sets down an exhaustive plan that attacks every known weakness in the country's educational system.

School buildings, books, computers and scholarships are glaring needs that members of the foundation have responded to with gusto. But the road map went beyond these to tackle teacher trainings, reading programs, science and math clubs or fairs and competitions, tutorials and bridge programs.

LCF's response also covered livelihood projects and capacity building, even health care delivery and feeding programs.

These programs have been aligned with the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals and the government's Basic Education Reform Agenda. These programs can be part of a fresh round of initiatives that can add to the success stories in the country.

A call for collective action. While many business organizations have aligned their respective education initiatives in the LCF roadmap, LCF made a plea for more to join in the collaborative effort. "There is an entire gamut of initiatives that we in the private sector can invest in," said CSR Expo 2006 Chair and Petron Executive director Marilou G. Erni. Our CSR Roadmap is an indicative guide for every company who wants to make a difference through education. I encourage you to look into your respective thrusts and competencies and find the ones which will make the biggest impact for your beneficiaries and your organization. I encourage you to share your best practices and success stories so we can inspire even more advocates and make it easy for them to develop new programs or replicate existing ones. I encourage you to look into strategic giving - investing in building system-wide solutions and capacity building rather than dwelling on projects. Make every child a reader. Build I.T. infrastructures and connect people. Strengthen and enhance academic curricula in schools, with a predisposition to business education. Likewise open windows for students to excel in math and science. Promote good health by building a culture for physical fitness and sports."

"Education is very basic, yet it is the cornerstone for any growth and development that we wish to have. Through this CSR roadmap, let us work together to make education a national priority," concluded Ms. Erni.

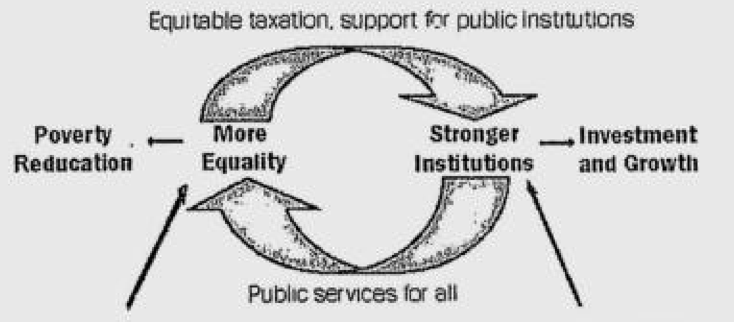
Ready for the challenge

The World Bank country director says corporations need not treat social investments as a trade off or a choice between investing into social development and addressing poverty and investing into economic assets and promoting growth.

"The real choice is between doing both simultaneously, social and economic, policy reforms and investments simultaneously to attain this virtuous circle as opposed to not taking initiative and marveling along and being content with the less," he says.

LCF's road map shows corporate Philippines is ready to take on the challenge.

Social Investment is not charity but good business!



SOCIAL POLICIES

- Education and social services
- Asset reform and income
- Social protection
- Empowerment and participation

ECONOMIC POLICIES

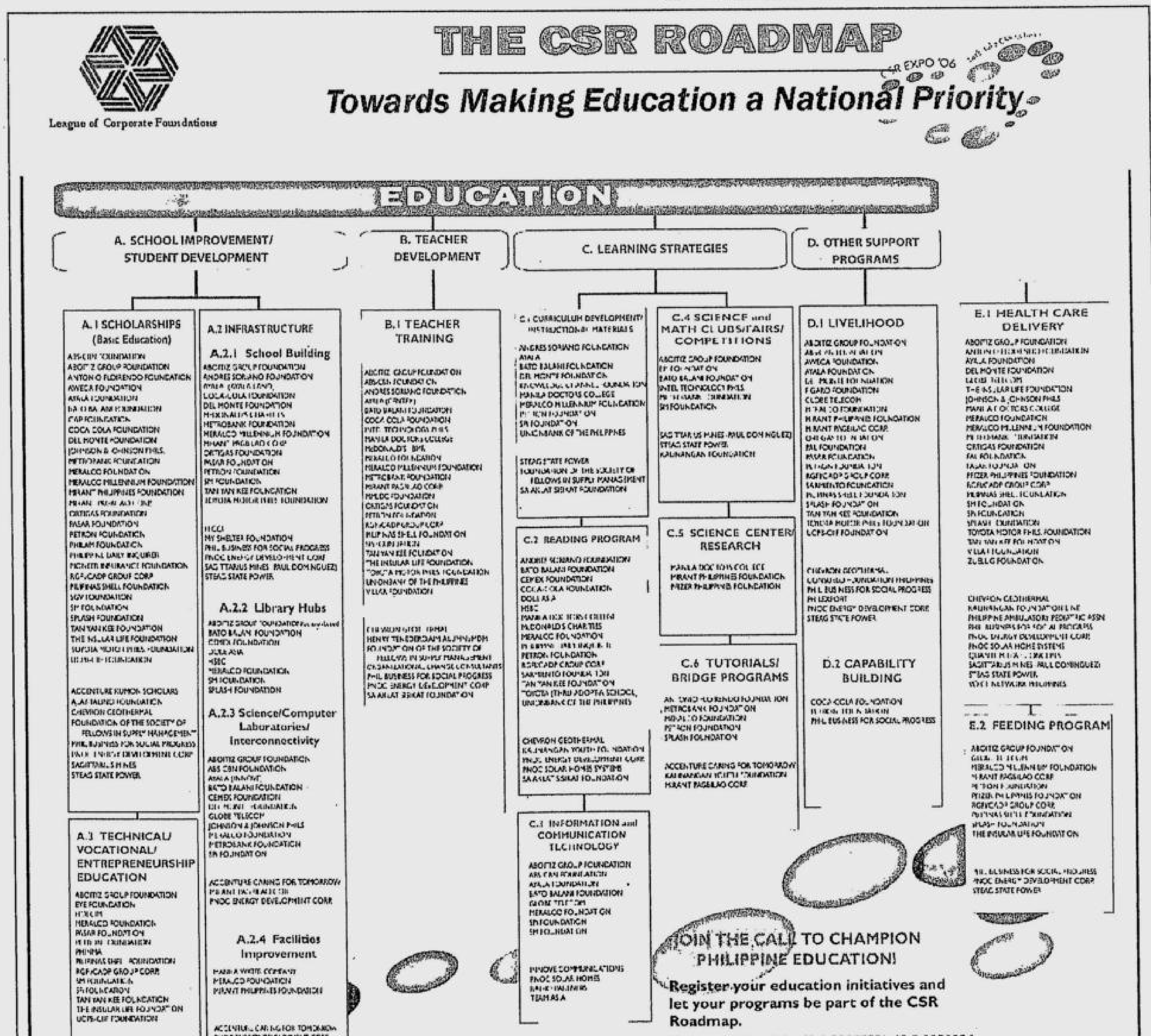
- Fiscal policy
- Governance
- Regulation
- Political reform

Souce: *"Social Investment is Not Charity - It's Good Business"* Presented by World Bank Country Director Joachim von Amsberg on July 5, 2006 during the CSR Expo 2006 at the Every Nation Leadership Institute

League of Corporate Foundations

THE CSR ROADMAP

Towards Making Education a National Priority



EDUCATION

A. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT/ STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

A.1 SCHOLARSHIPS (Basic Education)

ABS-CBN FOUNDATION
ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
ANTONIO FLORENDO FOUNDATION
AWECA FOUNDATION
AYALA FOUNDATION
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
CAP FOUNDATION
COCA COLA FOUNDATION
DEL MONTE FOUNDATION
JOHNSON & JOHNSON PHILS.
METROBANK FOUNDATION
MERALCO FOUNDATION
MERALCO MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
MIRANT PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP
ORTIGAS FOUNDATION
PASAR FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
PHILAM FOUNDATION
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
PIONEER INSURANCE FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
PILIPINAS SHELL FOUNDATION
SGV FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
SPLASH FOUNDATION
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
THE INSULAR LIFE FOUNDATION
TOYOTA MOTOR PHILS. FOUNDATION
UCPB-CIIF FOUNDATION

ACCENTURE KUMON SCHOLARS
[illegible] FOUNDATION
CHEVRON GEOTHERMAL
FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS IN SUPPLY MANAGEMENT
PHIL. BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
SAGITTARIUS MINES
STEAG STATE POWER

A.2 INFRASTRUCTURE

A.2.1 School Building

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
ANDRES SORIANO FOUNDATION
AYALA [illegible]
COCA-COLA FOUNDATION
DEL MONTE FOUNDATION
McDONALD'S CHARITIES
METROBANK FOUNDATION
MERALCO MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP
ORTIGAS FOUNDATION
PASAR FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
TOYOTA MOTOR PHILS. FOUNDATION

[illegible]
MY SHELTER FOUNDATION
PHIL. BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
SAGITTARIUS MINES (PAUL DOMINGUEZ)
STEAG STATE POWER

A.2.2 Library Hubs

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION [illegible]
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
CEMEX FOUNDATION
DOLE ASIA
HSBC
MERALCO FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
SPLASH FOUNDATION

A.2.3 Science/Computer Laboratories/ Interconnectivity

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
ABS CBN FOUNDATION
AYALA [illegible]
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
CEMEX FOUNDATION
DEL MONTE FOUNDATION
GLOBE TELECOM
JOHNSON & JOHNSON PHILS
MERALCO FOUNDATION
METROBANK FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION

ACCENTURE CARING FOR TOMORROW
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP

A.2.4 Facilities Improvement

MANILA WATER COMPANY
MERALCO FOUNDATION
MIRANT PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION

ACCENTURE CARING FOR TOMORROW
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP

A.3 TECHNICAL/ VOCATIONAL/ ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
EYE FOUNDATION
HOLCIM
MERALCO FOUNDATION
PASAR FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
PHINMA
PILIPINAS SHELL FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
SM FOUNDATION
[illegible]
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
THE INSULAR LIFE FOUNDATION
UCPB-CIIF FOUNDATION

B. TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

B.1 TEACHER TRAINING

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
ABS-CBN FOUNDATION
ANDRES SORIANO FOUNDATION
AYALA [illegible]
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
COCA COLA FOUNDATION
INTEL TECHNOLOGY PHILS
MANILA DOCTORS COLLEGE
McDONALD'S [illegible]
MERALCO FOUNDATION
MERALCO MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
METROBANK FOUNDATION
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP
[illegible] FOUNDATION
ORTIGAS FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
PILIPINAS SHELL FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
THE INSULAR LIFE FOUNDATION
TOYOTA MOTOR PHILS FOUNDATION
UNIONBANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
VILLAR FOUNDATION

CHEVRON GEOTHERMAL
[illegible]
FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS IN SUPPLY MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE CONSULTANTS
PHIL BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
SA AKLAT SISIKAT FOUNDATION

C. LEARNING STRATEGIES

C.1 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/ INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

ANDRES SORIANO FOUNDATION
AYALA
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
DEL MONTE FOUNDATION
[illegible]
MANILA DOCTORS COLLEGE
MERALCO MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
UNIONBANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

STEAG STATE POWER
FOUNDATION OF THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS IN SUPPLY MANAGEMENT
SA AKLAT SISIKAT FOUNDATION

C.2 READING PROGRAM

ANDRES SORIANO FOUNDATION
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
CEMEX FOUNDATION
COCA COLA FOUNDATION
DOLE ASIA
HSBC
MANILA DOCTORS COLLEGE
McDONALD'S CHARITIES
MERALCO FOUNDATION
[illegible]
PETRON FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
SARMIENTO FOUNDATION
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
TOYOTA (THRU ADOPT A SCHOOL)
UNIONBANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

CHEVRON GEOTHERMAL
KALINANGAN YOUTH FOUNDATION
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
PNOC SOLAR HOME SYSTEMS
SA AKLAT SISIKAT FOUNDATION

C.3 INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
ABS CBN FOUNDATION
AYALA FOUNDATION
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
GLOBE TELECOM
MERALCO FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
[illegible]

INNOVE COMMUNICATIONS
PNOC SOLAR HOMES
[illegible]
TEAM ASIA

C.4 SCIENCE and MATH CLUBS/FAIRS/ COMPETITIONS

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
[illegible]
BATO BALANI FOUNDATION
INTEL TECHNOLOGY PHILS
METROBANK FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION

SAGITTARIUS MINES (PAUL DOMINGUEZ)
STEAG STATE POWER
KALINANGAN FOUNDATION

C.5 SCIENCE CENTER/ RESEARCH

MANILA DOCTORS COLLEGE
MIRANT PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION
PFIZER PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION

C.6 TUTORIALS/ BRIDGE PROGRAMS

ANTONIO FLORENDO FOUNDATION
METROBANK FOUNDATION
MERALCO FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
SPLASH FOUNDATION

ACCENTURE CARING FOR TOMORROW
KALINANGAN YOUTH FOUNDATION
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP

D. OTHER SUPPORT PROGRAMS

D.1 LIVELIHOOD

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
[illegible]
AWECA FOUNDATION
AYALA FOUNDATION
[illegible]
FGARD FOUNDATION
GLOBE TELECOM
[illegible]
MIRANT PHILIPPINE FOUNDATION
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP
ORTIGAS FOUNDATION
PAL FOUNDATION
PASAR FOUNDATION
PETRON FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
SARMIENTO FOUNDATION
PILIPINAS SHELL FOUNDATION
SPLASH FOUNDATION
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
TOYOTA MOTOR PHILS FOUNDATION
UCPB-CIIF FOUNDATION

CHEVRON GEOTHERMAL
[illegible] FOUNDATION PHILIPPINES
PHIL BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS
PHILEXPORT
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
STEAG STATE POWER

D.2 CAPABILITY BUILDING

COCA-COLA FOUNDATION
[illegible]
PHIL BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

E.1 HEALTH CARE DELIVERY

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
ANTONIO FLORENDO FOUNDATION
AYALA FOUNDATION
DEL MONTE FOUNDATION
GLOBE TELECOM
THE INSULAR LIFE FOUNDATION
JOHNSON & JOHNSON PHILS
MANILA DOCTORS COLLEGE
MERALCO FOUNDATION
MERALCO MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
METROBANK FOUNDATION
ORTIGAS FOUNDATION
PAL FOUNDATION
PASAR FOUNDATION
PFIZER PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
PILIPINAS SHELL FOUNDATION
SM FOUNDATION
[illegible]
SPLASH FOUNDATION
TOYOTA MOTOR PHILS. FOUNDATION
TAN YAN KEE FOUNDATION
VILLAR FOUNDATION
ZUELLIG FOUNDATION

CHEVRON GEOTHERMAL
KALINANGAN FOUNDATION INC
PHILIPPINE AMBULATORY PEDIATRIC ASSN
PHIL BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
PNOC SOLAR HOME SYSTEMS
[illegible]
SAGITTARIUS MINES (PAUL DOMINGUEZ)
STEAG STATE POWER
[illegible]

E.2 FEEDING PROGRAM

ABOITIZ GROUP FOUNDATION
GLOBE TELECOM
MERALCO MILLENNIUM FOUNDATION
MIRANT PAGBILAO CORP
PETRON FOUNDATION
PFIZER PHILIPPINES FOUNDATION
ROXCADP GROUP CORP
PILIPINAS SHELL FOUNDATION
SPLASH FOUNDATION
THE INSULAR LIFE FOUNDATION

PHIL BUSINESS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS
PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORP
STEAG STATE POWER

JOIN THE CALL TO CHAMPION PHILIPPINE EDUCATION!

Register your education initiatives and let your programs be part of the CSR Roadmap.

Contact LCF at Tel: +63.2.8925753/+63.2.8929084
E-mail: secretariat@lcf.org.ph, lcf users@yahoo.com

NOTES:

1. This roadmap supports the key reform thrusts (KRTs) outlined in the Basic Education Sector Reform Agenda, or BESRA.
2. It is also aligned with UNDP Millennium Development Goals, specifically MDG #2: Achieve universal primary education.
3. LCF and its partners shall identify opportunities for collective action and transform the programs into a social policy agenda.

GMA 'amigas' want impeach raps junked

By Philip C. Tubeza

SEVENTEEN WOMEN SUPPORTERS of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday asked the House of Representatives to junk the impeachment complaints that various groups filed against President Arroyo.

In a five-page petition, the President's supporters said the impeachment complaints should be shelved since, among others, the issue of election fraud in the 2004 election was already "a dead issue."

"It can no longer be resurrected. It is the same issue raised in the 2005 impeachment cases filed against the President which were dismissed," the petitioners said.

The petitioners included the woman who wrote a note telling former opposition Rep. Didagen Dilangalen to "shut up" during the national canvassing of votes for president in May 2004.

Remedy

"Impeachment is not the appropriate process to question the legitimacy of the incumbent President or to question her victory in the 2004 election. The remedy is an election protest and said remedy already prescribed in July 2004," they said.

"This means no court or agency or tribunal may still hear and try any case assailing the legitimacy of the election of incumbent President," they added.

The petitioners included Suzette Pido, who wrote the note to Dilangalen, and Evelyn Kilayko, a member of GLO (or Gloria's Ladies Organization), a group of women from the privileged class which raised funds for the President's election campaign in 2004.

The other petitioners were Bessy Buencamino, Marrietta Cuyegkeng, Soiri Luz Nuyda, Esperanza Arkoncel, Josefina Parilla, Lolita Sunglao, Teresita Roseus, Haja Putri Zorayda Tamano, Rosellyn Magsaysay, Cherry Sarmiento Vallega; Peggy Vera, Emilia Caparas, Pilar Balce, Corazon Sison, and Lily Orendain.

Unwavering support

Kilayko, Pido, Buencamino, Cuyegkeng, Nuyda, and Vera also belong to the NGO "Mahal Ko, Bayan Ko" and were among those who signed a two-page newspaper spread last March 8, "declaring their unwavering support for the Constitution and the rule of law."

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said the petition would be referred to the House committee on justice, which is set to decide on Tuesday which of the eight impeachment complaints that were filed would be recognized.

Nograles said it would be up to the committee members to vote if they would accept the petition of the women to intervene in the impeachment process.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said the President's lawyers, not her supporters, should answer the charges against her.

He said he was confident that the justice committee would be able to decide which complaint to tackle and then formally notify the President to answer the charges against her.

Their motion also came after a Pulse Asia survey results released on Tuesday showed that 56 percent of the public wanted the impeachment process to proceed.

Lakas-CMD Representatives Eduardo Zialcita (Parañaque) and Isidoro Real (Zamboanga del Sur) yesterday said that results showed that the public rejected extra-constitutional means to resolve the issues against the President.

Zialcita said there was no conflict between the Pulse Asia survey results and the actual sentiments of their constituents, who they said were all for adherence to democratic processes like impeachment.

"The people still prefer the peaceful and constitutional means to address the issues against the President, which is impeachment," he added.

Irrelevant

Real said the Pulse Survey was "ultimately irrelevant because with or without it, the House is duty-bound to act on a verified impeachment complaint against the President."

"We follow the Constitution, not what any survey says. The Pulse survey will not have a bearing on our deliberations because we will act based on the form and substance of the complaints," he said.

"The justice committee has scheduled the start of the impeachment hearings on Aug. 8. We expect a faster resolution of the complaints this year since they mainly contain the same old, unfounded, debunked charges," he said.

Batangas gov slams relief of provincial police chief

SANCHEZ

PUNO

THE GOVERNOR OF BATANGAS yesterday accused the regional police office of Calabarzon of violating the local government code for ordering the relief and replacement of the provincial police director without consulting him.

In a letter to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Gov. Arman Sanchez lambasted the Calabarzon Police Regional Office for ordering the relief of Senior Supt. Francisco Don Montenegro as Batangas police chief and the designation of Senior Supt. Edmund Zaide as officer in charge without consulting the governor.

In the letter, sent through Philippine National Chief Director General Oscar Calderon on Tuesday, Sanchez pointed out that the relief of Montenegro from his post and the designation of Zaide as the officer in charge clearly violated RA 6975, or the Department of Interior and Local Government Act of 1990.

The law, Sanchez said, specifically provides that the provincial governor has the sole power to choose the police provincial director from a list of three eligible recommended by the PNP regional director.

The Calabarzon police office merely furnished Sanchez's office with a copy of the order on July 31 without any explanation or justification.

"The power to choose a provincial police director is vested upon the governor. In this instance, the termination of the designation of the provincial director and the subsequent designation of an officer in charge was done without us being formally informed of the same," Sanchez told Puno in his letter.

Sanchez said the replacement of Montenegro by Zaide was illegal. He also noted that the order issued by the Calabarzon Police Office was signed neither by the Police Regional Director nor by its officer in charge.

The order bears the name of a certain Police Senior Supt. Aaron Fidel but did not have his signature. The signatory on the order is Police Senior Supt. Rizaldo Tungala, Jr., chief of the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Division.

Sanchez also said he viewed the development with grave concern and asked Puno to order an immediate investigation into the matter.

"We in the local governments give great value to the powers vested in us by law and we cannot just let this pass without posing a challenge to the same," he said.

Sanchez also called on his fellow governors during the general assembly of the League of Provinces yesterday at the Discovery Suites in Pasig City to join him in challenging the order, saying that it encroaches on the powers of local governments and could set a bad precedent.

"I am appalled that certain senior police officials have totally disregarded the law that defines the functions, duties and responsibilities of the PNP. These police officials who think they are above the law and can do whatever they want should be investigated and sanctioned," Sanchez said.

No need for new law on initiative, says prof

AN ATENEO LAW PROFESSOR yesterday said there is no need to enact a new law to empower the people to propose changes in the Constitution through a people's initiative, saying a 1997 Supreme Court decision did not declare the Initiative and Referendum Act of 1989 unconstitutional.

Political lawyer and law professor Alberto C. Agra there is no need for a law other than Republic Act No. 6734, clarifying that the Supreme Court in the 1997 case of Defensor vs Santiago did not declare it void.

"It would be Comelec, not the Supreme Court, that will determine in the first instance whether the petition that will be filed by 9 million Filipinos must be given due course," Agra said in a statement.

While the Comelec cannot give due course to any petition for people's initiative because of the permanent injunction issued by the Supreme Court, Sigaw ng Bayan and Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines—the two proponents of the people's initiative—have no recourse but to still file the petition with the Comelec.

"They cannot go directly to the Supreme Court. They just have to elevate the matter to the Supreme Court as soon as they get an unfavorable ruling on the matter," Agra said.

Agra said he believes there is nothing more that to add to the Initiative Act that would make it complete or more complete. "With the broad and specific powers of the Comelec, it will simply examine the contents of the petition to determine if it is sufficient in form and substance, verify the signatures, and set the calendar of activities," the lawyer said.

Villanueva; 74

ABELARDO VILLANUEVA, PRESIDENT OF the Federation of Senior Golfers Associations of the Philippines and the Asean Federation of Senior Golfers, died yesterday at age 74. He was also one of the founders of golfers' associations such as the UP Barkada and the Upsilonians na Pumapalo, and charter member and past president of the Rotary Club of New Manila East, District 3780. His body will lie at the Sta. Maria della Strada parish church on Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City, until Friday morning. Cremation will be at noon of the same day.

Crispino; 58

SALVADOR B. CRISPINO of Dona Josefa Village, Las Piñas died yesterday morning at the age of 58. He was formerly a supervisor of PLDT who retired with full disability 1994. He survived by his wife Linda, children Rose and Andrew, Rowena and Giovanni, Rochelle and Mark, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren.

His remains lie at Loyola Memorial Chapels at Sucat, Parañaque.

Interment will be at Manila Memorial Park on Sunday after a 9 a.m. Mass.

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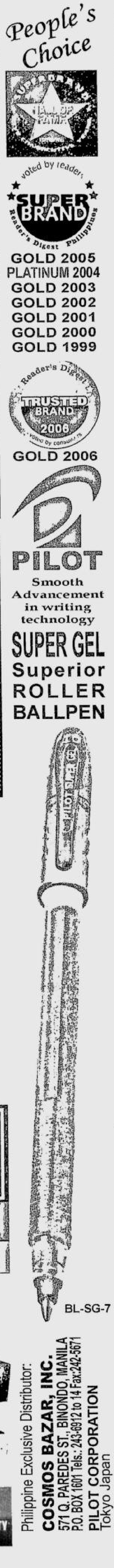

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GMA men, foes meet in secret peace dialogue

From page A1

But participants like Christian Monsod, head of the anti-Charter change group One Voice, and "Hyatt 10" members Florencio "Butch" Abad and Teresita "Ging" Deles reportedly argued that the immediate issue that had to be resolved was the allegation that Ms Arroyo cheated in the 2004 elections.

"We can't tackle the rest of the issues until we settle the legitimacy issue first," the INQUIRER source quoted Abad as addressing the gathering.

Listen, not argue

Throughout the discussions, Kahane reminded participants to "listen and not argue."

Kahane cited his experience in facilitating dialogues in South Africa dubbed the "Mont Fleur Scenarios."

"But the Philippines is different from South Africa," the source quoted Monsod as telling Kahane, who was also introducing principles in his book, "Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities."

In the end, the source said participants agreed to hold another meeting exclusively devoted to the legitimacy crisis in the second week of the month. Separate gatherings were also set to tackle the four other problems in September.

Closed book

The Hyatt 10 is a group of Cabinet officials and government executives who resigned in July last year. It has since then called on Ms Arroyo to step down.

At one point, the participant said Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes complained that accepting the legitimacy issue would be tantamount to admitting that "we are all illegitimate."

The secretary was referring to all officials who assumed office following Ms Arroyo's disputed victory two years ago.

"The government representatives said that that wasn't an issue," he recalled. "Besides, they claimed that the issue had already gone through the process and it's already a closed book."

Reyes could be referring to the impeachment complaint against Ms Arroyo that the administration-dominated House of Representatives threw out last year. A new impeachment complaint has been filed against the President.

Off limits

A copy of a "protocol" furnished the INQUIRER explicitly said that the event was "off limits to the media and inquiries from the public to secure the participants and ensure an atmosphere conducive to frank and open discussions."

Among those present were Sen. Mar Roxas, former Sen. Wigberto Tañada, Presidential Management Staff chief Arthur Yap, Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Jesus Dureza, Cabinet Secretary Ricardo Saludo, Anakpawis party-list Rep. Rafael Mariano and Ferdinand Gaite, national president of the Confederation for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees.

Anticrime advocate Teresita Ang-See, SGV & Co. founder Washington Sycip, and former Ambassadors to the Holy See Howard Dee and Henrietta de Villa also joined the dialogue.

Also in attendance were former UP president Jose Abueva, a leading advocate of Charter change, Bulacan Gov. Josie de la Cruz, Ramon Magsaysay awardee and INQUIRER founder Eugenia Apostol, Prof. Taha Basman of the Philippine Islamic Council, and Alim Esmail Ibrahim of the Muslim advisory council.

Together with Rosales and Lagdameo, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma of Cagayan de Oro and Bishop Gabriel Reyes of Antipolo served as observers, according to the source.

The official invitations had Lagdameo's signature, indicating that the event may have been his initiative.

People of influence

The Sunday dialogue had a relatively light schedule from 12 noon to 8 p.m. The following day, participants tackled the "most serious problems of the country" from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"The goal was to gather people of influence and show that the Philippines is not a hopeless case," the source said.

"Despite the differences, we were able to show that the country is resilient, that we still have that sense of brotherhood."

One of the moderators was Ernesto Garilao, executive director of the Asian Institute of Management and a former agrarian secretary.

IN THE KNOW

Expert tells participants to 'listen and not argue'

A LEADING DESIGNER AND FACILITATOR of solutions in business and political problems, Adam Kahane is a founding partner of Generon Consulting and of the Global Leadership Initiative.

The celebrated author of "Solving Tough Problems: An Open Way of Talking, Listening, and Creating New Realities" (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2004), Kahane has worked with world leaders, executives, generals, civil servants, clergy and artists in more than 50 countries.

From 1988 to 1993, Kahane was head of Social, Political, Economic and Technological Scenarios for Royal Dutch/Shell in London. Prior to this, he had also held strategy and research positions at the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. in San Francisco, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Vienna and the Institute for Energy Economics in Tokyo.

Kahane also worked in the Universities of Toronto, British Columbia, California and the Western Cape.

In 1991 and 1992, Kahane collaborated with a diverse group of Africans in the Mont Fleur Scenario Project, which pushed for the country's transition to democracy. He has facilitated many multi-stakeholder dialogue-and-action processes throughout the world since then.

One of those featured in Fast Company's sixteen outstanding individuals, Kahane is a member of the Commission on Globalization, the Aspen Institute's Business Leaders' Dialogue, the Society for Organizational Learning, the Global Leadership Network, and Global Business Network.

Kahane has a Bachelor of Science in Physics from McGill University in Montreal where he graduated with First Class honors. He has also earned two masteral degrees—in Energy and Resource Economics from the University of California in Berkeley and in Applied Behavioral Science from Bastyr University in Seattle. He also studied negotiation at Harvard Law School.

A native of Montreal, Kahane is now based in Boston and Capetown with his family. ***Mel Lawrence de Guzman, PDI Research***

Palace: It's hard to say what we can do ...

From page A1

journalists and government officials shall be successfully resolved. That there are no sacred cows and the guilty will be brought to the bar of justice, whoever they may be."

On Tuesday, the President ordered the Department of Justice and the Philippine National Police to jail within 10 weeks the suspects in at least 10 cases involving the killing of journalists and leftist activists. *(See related story on Page A2.)*

Yesterday, Ermita said Ms Arroyo had no choice but to issue a strong statement on the killings.

"She has to reemphasize her policy because if she kept quiet, the public might think she is just ignoring and is not bothered by these developments," he said.

Tremendous pressure

PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr. admitted that police were under tremendous pressure to solve the political killings, but assured the public that they would not disregard legal processes and their own operating procedures in meeting Ms Arroyo's deadline.

What the public will see is a realigning of resources so that the PNP can "come up with something substantial," Pagdilao said.

Asked if killers were expected to "lie low" following Ms Arroyo's directive, he said: "That should be an effect. That should also be a strong message to them that law enforcement agencies, [such as the] NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) and the police, are now tasked to really produce results."

But investigators will not cut corners, Pagdilao said.

He added: "Even if there is a deadline, we will have to work within the legal and constitutional framework. We are not going to sacrifice legal procedures and our own procedures just so we can comply.

"If there is no evidence against persons or suspects, then we will have to let the evidence speak. We will not be producing fall guys."

Task force report

In May, Malacañang ordered police to dig deeper into the political killings. This led the PNP to form Task Force Usig with Deputy Director General Avelino Razon Jr. as its head.

According to the task force's report, authorities are looking into 102 murder cases, of which 26 have been filed in court and 76 are still under investigation.

The task force said only 15 cases could be traced directly to soldiers and policemen, and 16 cases to communist rebels.

Ermita said Task Force Usig had at least identified the suspects in a quarter of the cases.

But in Hong Kong, Michael Anthony of the Asian Human Rights Commission yesterday said Task Force Usig had already denied any police or military responsibility for the killings even before its investigation had finished.

"This is prejudging the findings of any investigation and leads to the conclusion that the group is tasked with attempting to cover up any state responsibility for such acts," Anthony told reporters in Hong Kong after a fact-finding trip to the Philippines.

He quoted the task force as saying that it had investigated or was looking into only 127 killings, compared to the more than 700 civilian deaths since 2001 estimated by the Philippine human rights group Karapatan.

The Asian Human Rights Commission, a Hong Kong-based non-government organization, and other Hong Kong rights groups interviewed Razon during a visit to the Philippines last week.

Journalists, human rights advocates, clergymen, lawyers and judges who have been labeled "enemies of the state" were also interviewed.

Independent body

The groups called for an independent and transparent body to look into the attacks and disappearances.

They said investigators should also provide a viable witness protection system in order to file charges against perpetrators.

Ermita said it was unfair of critics to say that the Arroyo administration was tolerating a climate of impunity through its tolerance of the rising body count.

"The purpose of government is to provide safety and improve the well-being of the people. I think it's not appropriate [to say] that the national leadership thinks of this as a policy," he said.

Ermita said it was likewise unfair to label the murder of all 244 leftist activists and 47 journalists as politically motivated. He said not all of the deaths were related to their advocacy or profession.

He also said calls for the firing of Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan were uncalled for because no formal charges had been filed against the officer dubbed a "butcher" by dint of the wave of assassinations in areas under his command.

"It's not fair to sanction anybody not prosecuted within our legal procedure. Wherever we will put him (Palparan), his critics will always hound him. But it does not mean the President is tolerating him," Ermita said.

Ms Arroyo heaped lavish praise on Palparan during her State of the Nation Address last month.

Feeling the heat

Pagdilao said police had been feeling the heat even before Ms Arroyo laid down the deadline.

"There is so much pressure because of the expectation of the public for these killings to be solved by the police, given that there are already a number [of cases]," he said.

Asked to comment on criticism that the PNP had not done enough, such as investigating the military, Pagdilao said Task Force Usig had in fact included police and soldiers, their assets and militia members among the suspects.

"That much has been said by General Razon. The military is also being investigated as well as the Left," he said.

Pagdilao reiterated that the investigations had so far failed to produce sufficient evidence linking Palparan to the executions.

"If you question him without the goods, he will just deny it. That will be the end of the case. Will you be clearing him already? The investigation does not work that way," Pagdilao said. ***With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Leila B. Salaverria, AP***

Military, cops blamed for killings, says Ibon survey

By Mel Lawrence de Guzman
PDI Research

THE MAJORITY OF FILIPINOS aware of the spate of political killings since 2001 believe that the military and police are to blame, according to a survey conducted by Ibon Foundation Inc.

The results of the nationwide survey showed that 77.5 percent of Filipinos were aware of the assassination of activists, journalists and other civilians critical of the government.

When made to select from a list wherein they could give multiple answers, 66.9 percent of those aware of the killings said they believed that the military and police were to blame, and 39.8 percent believed that the Communist Party of the Philippines/New People's Army and other rebel groups were the culprits.

The rest of the respondents blamed the government (10.32 percent), criminal syndicates (0.78 percent), vigilantes (0.95 percent), drug addicts (0.35 percent) and rival activists (0.17 percent).

As much as 92.5 percent of those aware of the issue said the Arroyo administration should do something to stop the killings. When asked why, 85 percent reasoned that it was the responsibility of the government to protect the lives of civilians, while 38 percent said this was also because the military and police were the perpetrators.

The survey, conducted from June 28 to July 7, used a multi-stage random sampling and covered 1,487 respondents.

It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percent and a confidence level of 97 percent, according to Ibon Foundation.

'Tall order'

SENATORS ARE EAGER TO see results.

Sen. Franklin Drilon said the President Macapagal-Arroyo's 10-week deadline was "a tall order, but heads must roll if [it] is not met."

He said this would be a test of the Arroyo administration's seriousness in solving the murders.

"The lack of any investigation for the past several months certainly has given credence to the belief of many people that this is her (Ms Arroyo's) state policy..." Drilon said.

"We will see what happens in 10 weeks, and the credibility of the government ... will be put to a test," he said.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense and security, said Ms Arroyo's directive was "a first step" toward solving the killings.

"Let us just hope the appropriate agencies are able to meet the deadline," he said.

But he said authorities should not be selective in the cases they would solve just to meet Ms Arroyo's deadline.

"If the government is really serious in addressing this disturbing trend, the CHR (Commission on Human Rights) must be included in the creation of any task force [that will pursue the cases]," Biazon said.

'Hypocrites'

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that instead of accusing the government of being responsible for the assassinations, the families of those killed should cooperate with state efforts to address the issue.

Gonzalez said those who had been blaming the police and military for the killings were "hypocrites."

"They want us for help, they want us to solve cases, then they don't want to cooperate. *Paano naman yun* (How's that)? They are hypocrites. They just want to complain for the sake of complaining and exaggerate their stories," Gonzalez told reporters.

Iron fist for Rangers, kid gloves for Marines in pretrial

From page A1

trial investigation before the Judge Advocate General's Office (Jago) in Camp Aguinaldo. They were neither handcuffed nor escorted by military police (MP), as would be expected of military personnel facing court-martial for mutiny charges.

They freely conferred with their lawyers and with one another. Later, because they are not in detention, they left in their own vehicles.

In contrast, 17 of the 25 officers of the Army's elite First Scout Ranger Regiment (FSRR) who were linked to the plot appeared before the same Jago panel under heavy guard.

They were each handcuffed to an MP escort from the time they were taken from their maximum security detention facility in Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, until they were brought into the Jago courtroom.

'Like criminals'

The cuffs were taken off during the hearing but MPs wielding long firearms stood guard in and outside the courtroom, where family members and other kin waited to reunite with the officers.

One of the wives brought her young son, who was heard calling for "Daddy" at one point in the hearing.

"I was hurt because they came in in handcuffs like criminals," said 64-year-old Gaudencio Estolas, the father of 1st Lt. Homer Estolas.

The elder Estolas said he had flown in from Cebu to see his son, whom he had not seen for months.

The three-man investigating panel headed by the Jago deputy chief, Col. Al Perreras, served the charge sheets on the 26 officers present. They were charged with attempting to begin or create mutiny and with conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman (Articles of War 67 and 96).

Perreras gave the nine Marine officers led by former operations chief Lt. Col. Custodio Parcon, a Medal of Valor awardee, until Aug. 14 to submit counter-affidavits.

Transfer of venue

He said the next hearing would be held at the Bonifacio Naval Station Officers Club in Fort Bonifacio, where the Marine headquarters is based.

But the 17 Scout Rangers, led by former FSRR chief of staff Lt. Col. Nestor Flordeliza, were required to submit counter-affidavits on Aug. 10.

Their lawyers protested when Perreras announced that the next hearing would be held at the Officers Club in Camp Capinpin, which is at least three hours away from Metro Manila.

Abraham Espejo Jr., legal counsel of Flordeliza and former battalion commander Lt. Col. Edmundo Malabanjot, told the Jago panel there was "no state of emergency, no [threat of] terrorist attack" to justify the transfer of venue.

He said holding the hearing at such a faraway place was tantamount to "depriving our clients of counsel."

Alex Avisado Jr., legal counsel of former FSRR operations chief Maj. Jason Aquino and Capt. Joey Fontiveros, also said he and other lawyers were given the runaround by custodians and prevented from seeing their clients.

But Perreras ignored the protests, saying the choice of venue was brought about by "security reasons."

"Why is there a double standard when it comes to the Scout Rangers? They're too hard on the Scout Rangers," Espejo later told reporters.

Former FSRR commander Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, the alleged principal instigator of the plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo, was earlier told to submit his counter-affidavit during the Aug. 10 hearing.

Meanwhile, ex-Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda and Col. Ariel Querubin, who allegedly supported the plot, are expected to appear before the Jago panel today at Camp Aguinaldo.

'Just a captain'

Before the start of yesterday's hearing, Capt. Ruben Guinolbay, former FSRR personnel chief and dubbed hero of the June 2001 siege in Lamitan, Basilan, denied involvement in the purported coup plot.

"I'm just a captain. I can't possibly lead a coup d'etat," Guinolbay told reporters who had chanced upon him and the rest of the implicated officers outside the Jago building.

But he refused to say what the Scout Rangers were up to on Feb. 24. "You should ask them," he said, referring to the military leadership.

Aside from Parcon, the other Marine officers who showed up yesterday were Lieutenant Colonels Armando Banez, Achilles Segumalian, Martin Villasan, Valentin Hizon, Reynaldo Ocsan and Romulo Gualdrapa, Maj. Francisco Domingo Fernandez and 1st Lt. Belinda Ferrer.

Only Fernandez and Ferrer submitted their counter-affidavits.

Segumalian, who was seen during the Feb. 26 Marine standoff shouting about alleged cheating in Lanao during the 2004 elections, was additionally charged with conduct prejudicial to good order and military discipline (Article of War 97).

"We are prohibited from talking. I hope you understand," a smiling Segumalian told reporters.

Parcon, who was mobbed by TV news crews and photographers after the hearing, also politely declined interviews.

'Sensitive matters'

Among the Marines, Parcon and Querubin are the only two living recipients of the Medal of Valor, the military's highest honor.

At the DOJ, Gonzalez said the decision not to allow investigators to release details about the inquiry into the purported coup plot was reached during a meeting last week at Camp Crame.

He said that representatives of the National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine National Police, Armed Forces and Department of Interior and Local Government were present at the meeting, and that no spokesperson for the inquiry had been designated.

Gonzalez, however, said that while certain information was restricted from being made public, a total news blackout could not be imposed.

He said the gag order concerned only "sensitive matters."

"Like, if General (Danilo) Lim went to the NBI and passed Secretary Gonzalez, there is no blackout there," he said.

"Eventually things will have to be released because that is transparency. But while [the inquiry is] ongoing, we don't want to do it," Gonzalez said, adding that the government would have to cross-check the information it had been getting. ***With a report from Leila B. Salaverria***

GMA orders full evacuation of 30,000 OFWs

From page A1

US-funded International Organization for Migration yesterday joined in the effort, ferrying home 447 Filipinos, the largest batch so far to return home.

Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. told reporters the President wanted the evacuation to be done "as soon as possible." He said officials were coming up with an expanded master plan to execute the presidential order.

OFWs in south Lebanon

"Obviously, we cannot ask all the 30,000 to descend from their homes and proceed to the relocation sites," Conejos said. He said that the top priority was to move out those living in southern Lebanon, followed by a small group of Filipinos in an area between Sidon and Beirut.

The Sidon-Beirut area was dangerous "because as the Israelis try to push back the Hezbollah further up to Beirut—their objective is to free a buffer zone—naturally the Hezbollah would fall back on areas closer to Beirut," Conejos said.

Nearly 19,000 of the overseas Filipino workers were in Beirut. Another 303 Filipinos were in Sidon, 514 in Tripoli, 431 in Jounieh and 315 in Dora.

Funding

"What do we do, if the overseas Filipino worker decides not to go?" he said. "At that point, we will ask him to sign a waiver or an understanding that government has advised him to leave."

ALL THE bombings and a serious oil spill, too. Much of the the Lebanese capital's coastline is now awash with crude oil believed to have come from a power plant some 20 kms south of Beirut, which has been on fire since it was hit by Israeli air strikes. It's said to have leaked about 15,000 tons of oil into the Mediterranean Sea. AP

Overseas Workers Welfare Administration chief Marianito Roque said the operation could cost government P2 billion or less.

Ermita said the Palace had already allocated P1 billion for the evacuation of Filipinos in Lebanon. He said another P1 billion would come from funds that the Department of Budget and Management would identify.

"The President said let cost not be the reason for us not being able to evacuate them," Ermita said. "We should not think of cost when we want the safety of our Filipinos out of Lebanon."

"The maximum effort (to evacuate) must be focused in the next two weeks as Israel intensifies and tries to consolidate its military position before the political solution kicks in," Conejos said.

Not eager to go back

"The good news is we now have a closer coordination between the embassy and the people of Owwa, adequate funds to evacuate them and a good view of how to go about the evacuation plan," said De Castro. Philippine Ambassador Al Francis Bichara had earlier complained he had not been given money by Manila for the repatriation effort.

De Castro said not too many Filipinos were enthusiastic to return to the Philippines. He said the buses hired by the embassy to bring OFWs to Damascus from Beirut were not filled. "Those who want to return will be sent home."

He said one option was for the OFWs to cross northern Lebanon where they can temporarily stay in evacuation centers to be arranged by the government. From there, they would be taken to Damascus, Syria, possibly for eventual repatriation to the Philippines.

De Castro said that he had asked for a master list of all OFWs in Lebanon so the embassy personnel could locate them. He said that most of the addresses listed by OFWs were those of their recruiters in Lebanon or just their plain "P.O. Box number."

Next 2 weeks critical

He said the most critical situation would be the next two weeks as Israeli forces intensify their attacks against the group.

De Castro said the government was also considering the use of ships, aside from chartered planes, for the mass evacuation.

Bahrain had offered to fly from Damascus to Bahrain 1,000 OFWs in an emergency and allow them to stay in Bahrain for seven days, he said.

From Bahrain, it would be cheaper for the government to fly them to Manila, he said.

De Castro said the task force had been holding daily meetings to better assess the situation in Lebanon.

Bichara testimony irks Malacañang

From page A1

workers in Lebanon.

In an interview with the INQUIRER, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said that he ordered the DFA officials yesterday "to remind Bichara to clear with his bosses before he submits himself to any inquiry."

Surprised

"We were all surprised why he submitted himself while we in here, didn't allow ourselves to attend the hearing," Ermita said.

The DFA claimed that it had failed to inform Bichara of Ermita's order which was only submitted hours before Bichara made his testimony.

BICHARA

Ermita, however, told the DFA to make sure that all Philippine ambassadors were covered by his order because they were under the Executive branch.

'We slept with dog, ate leftovers for $200/month'

From page A1

the end, you clean four houses instead of just one," another arrival said.

Legaspi said that she herself was made to clean her employer's family mountain resort house. "My employer told me I could clean it in an hour, but the house was so huge that the living room itself took more than an hour to clean," she said.

Cleaning pool, caring for turtle

She said she was also made to clean the turtle's cage, while it was Sampiano's job to give the dog a bath. The turtle eventually got lost, Legaspi said, and she took the blame for it.

"I clean the house. I clean the swimming pool. Do I still have to look after a turtle?" an annoyed Legaspi said.

At her employer's household, Legaspi said she and Filipino companions had to deal with a nasty Lebanese governess who would make them eat leftovers, at times nearly spoiled.

She hit her back

Sampiano, a spunky 25-year-old from Maguindanao, said that she eventually learned to stand up for herself. Once, she said, they had an argument and the governess hit her on the back of her head.

"So I hit her on the forehead. She got so mad at me that she splashed coffee on my uniform," Sampiano said, laughing.

"That's how you learn to survive. Show them you're tough so they won't exploit you," Sampiano said.

She said her contract originally stated that her salary should be $200 a month but when she got to Lebanon, her employer reduced it to $150 simply because she had no experience working overseas. She said that often, their salaries would be delayed by more than a month.

No day off

To top it all off, Sampiano said she and Legaspi were not given a day off.

Legaspi said that when she announced she would go home because of the war her employer agreed and had the family driver took her and Sampiano to the Church of the Miraculous Medal, the Filipinos' relocation center in Beirut.

The two other Filipinos in the household remained because one had taken in advance most of her salary while the other was too scared to leave because she had only been there for three months.

3 'jumped ship' in Syria

Not all Filipinos who escaped from Lebanon wanted to go back to the Philippines. Some decided not to join the flight home on arriving in Syria.

The latest to escape were three OFWs who were supposed to take the first IOM plane to Manila, a chartered Orient-Thai Airways flight OEA 7444 that touched down at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport at around 5 a.m.

Marianito Roque, administrator of the Overseas Welfare Workers Administration, said that the three OFWs "jumped ship" in Syria. "We have encountered a few cases like this since the conflict started," Roque said. These OFWs could have jobs waiting for them in Syria.

Many of those who returned to Manila have said that they would still look for work in other countries, citing the poverty and lack of jobs available in the Philippines.

2,000 returnees

The number of OFW returnees reached the 2,000 mark with the arrival of the IOM flight and the 295 who flew aboard an Owwa-chartered Philippine Airlines on Tuesday night.

One of the flight attendants on PR 009, which arrived at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, told the INQUIRER that most of the OFWs had shared their "many sad stories" with the PAL cabin crew.

Several OFWs shared heartwarming stories about their kind Lebanese employers. But many other OFWs explained that it was pure luck for their compatriots to have been hired by good Lebanese people.

Shortly before the war in Lebanon broke out, the Department of Foreign Affairs had received several reports on Filipino domestic helpers allegedly committing suicide by jumping off buildings.

Another OFW, Wilma, who did not want to give her last name, described the Lebanese couple that hired her as a bit "weird."

They locked her in their apartment when she told them she would go back to the Philippines. She was told that if she wanted to leave, she must pay back the $1,000 they had spent to hire her.

"I asked them if the money was more important than my life," Wilma said.

Escape through the terrace

Wilma said the war left her with no choice but to escape through the terrace by tying five blankets together. She hit the ground hard and showed the media her badly bruised right foot. She added that she still had back pains.

Also back on Tuesday in the company of her three children at Barangay Batonlapoc in Botolan, Zambales, was Floreli Lara, 32, who asked the INQUIRER to relay the message of about 500 Filipinos, mostly women, left at the Church of the Miraculous Medal in Beirut.

"We want to go home, return alive to our family," Lara recalled of the wish by the Filipinos she left on Friday in the church-turned-evacuation center.

Describing their plight, Lara said in Filipino, "We were exhausted, sleepless and hungry there." In the three days that she was in the center, she said the meals consisted of two spoonfuls of rice and a spoonful of viand.

Crossing the border

Crossing the Lebanon-Syria border was also difficult. The trip, which should take just five hours, dragged on for 14 hours as security officials screened runaway domestic workers.

This was because employers alerted the authorities on maids who fled and absconded on their contracts. Employers paid as much as $1,400 to agencies to get maids.

"A Filipina jumped from the third floor of a building to escape her employer, who did not want her to leave," Lara said. She said she saw a woman who lost her mind amid the bombings, and heard of stories about Filipinas being raped or who were able to fight off rape attempts by their employers.

Prayers, she said, got her to the border. Her employer, the mayor of Jounieh City and president of five towns, was raring to get her back as she and two other Filipinas from Quezon province still had six months left to serve in their contract.

$200 monthly salary

To Lara, all the dangers that she had been through in the last three weeks were huge compared to the salary—$200 or more than P10,000—that she raced to get. She has worked in Lebanon for a year and six months.

She said the bombings, one of which shattered the glass windows in her employer's house and injured her, had traumatized her. "Sometimes, I am still absent-minded," she said.

But she said she was overwhelmed by the joy of being with her children again and, at the same time, frightened by the thought of being jobless again. Without a license to teach, this education graduate said she may end up again operating a copier machine.

The Owwa promised help but all she got upon arrival in Manila on Tuesday night was a pack of soap and shampoo. *With a report from Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Most advanced robot goes 'lo-bat' in Makati show

From page A1

stalled yesterday during the opening of the Honda World 2006 exhibit at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City.

Organizers said a power fluctuation messed up Asimo's controls during the program.

The exhibit, which runs until Aug. 6, showcases Honda's latest innovations in mobility, including the Japanese company's latest lineup of automobiles and motorcycles.

The star of the show was Asimo, short for "Advanced Step in Mobility," one of at least 20 identical robots of Honda. Asimo's voice is that of a young boy apparently because of its generally male-sounding name and its height of 1.2 meters or 4 feet.

Asimo's size and weight of 52 kilos allow it to operate freely in human living space, according to Honda.

Intro cut short

First introduced in 2000 as being capable of simulating how humans walk, Asimo can amble on uneven slopes and surfaces, turn smoothly, climb stairs, reach for and grasp objects, switch lights on and off, and open and close doors.

At Glorietta, Asimo was supposed to do the opening number for the Honda exhibit when it froze in mid-sentence just as it was introducing itself barely a minute after appearing on stage.

"Hello, my name is Asimo. I can walk, I can dance..." was all it was able to say.

Organizers said a fluctuation in Asimo's power source disrupted controls, disabling the robot.

An amused member of the audience pointed his cell phone at Asimo, pretending to be pushing buttons on a remote control to make the robot move.

But Asimo remained immobile until the program ended more than an hour later. He was carted away behind a wall of car covers.

Battery

Asimo's internal power source is a 7.7-kg nickel metal hydride battery that provides about half an hour of energy and takes four hours to fully charge.

In the middle of the show when the program moved on to human performers, a technician ran to Asimo to plug in a cable behind its backpack.

Another spectator was overheard saying: "They forgot to charge him last night."

Asimo is not autonomous and cannot, for example, enter a room and make decisions on how to navigate, according to websites about the robot.

It is described as resembling an astronaut wearing a space suit because of its "backpack," which houses its brain—the computer through which the robot is controlled.

There are three ways to control Asimo—through a PC; by wireless controller, which is some kind of a joystick; and by voice command.

First visit

Asimo first visited the Philippines in 2003 when a series of educational shows demonstrated the robot's abilities and Honda's milestones in mobility-related technology.

Honda engineers took more than 18 years of research, and trial and error before they were able to create Asimo.

The current model is able to recognize moving objects, sounds and voices as well as simple directions and gestures from humans.

Honda said Asimo could also recognize the faces of 10 different people that have been pre-registered in its program. He could accurately address them by name.

Important tasks

Currently, there are Asimo units that serve as tour guides in museums and as greeters at high-tech companies in Japan. Rental fees are estimated at about $150,000 a month.

Honda hopes that in the future, Asimo can serve as another set of eyes, ears, hands and legs for all kinds of people in need.

In the website, asimo.honda.com, the robot's creators said someday Asimo might help with important tasks like assisting the elderly or a person confined to a bed or a wheelchair.

"Asimo might also perform certain tasks that are dangerous to humans, such as fighting fires or cleaning up toxic spills," the creators said.

IN THE KNOW

HONDA CREATED Asimo (Advanced Step in Innovative Mobility) in the hope of building a humanoid robot that can function in a human living environment in the near future.

Released in 2000, the original Asimo has a height (1.2 meters) ideal for operating light switches and doorknobs, and for working at tables. It can walk up to 1.6 kilometers in an hour. The 52 kilogram-robot can also move its head, arms, hands and legs.

In December 2005, the New Asimo was released. The 1.3-meter tall robot can hold a person's hand while walking with him or her at 2.7 kph. Despite becoming heavier at 54 kg, it can now run at 6 kph, and can even run in a circular manner (2.5-meter radius) at 5 kph.

Visual and floor surface sensors, and other components allow the New Asimo to act as a receptionist, give and receive objects (like a tray) in a timely manner, and move carts at will.

Even when the cart's movement has been disturbed, the robot can take flexible actions like slowing down and changing directions. Its walking speed while carrying a 1-kg object is 1.6 kph. Operational time (walking) is 40 minutes. *Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

ASIMO
HONDA

THE WORLD'S MOST ADVANCE humanoid is presented by Honda as its "ambassador of technology" on Wednesday at the Glorietta Activity Center. ROGER CARPIC

Fighting escalates; no ceasefire

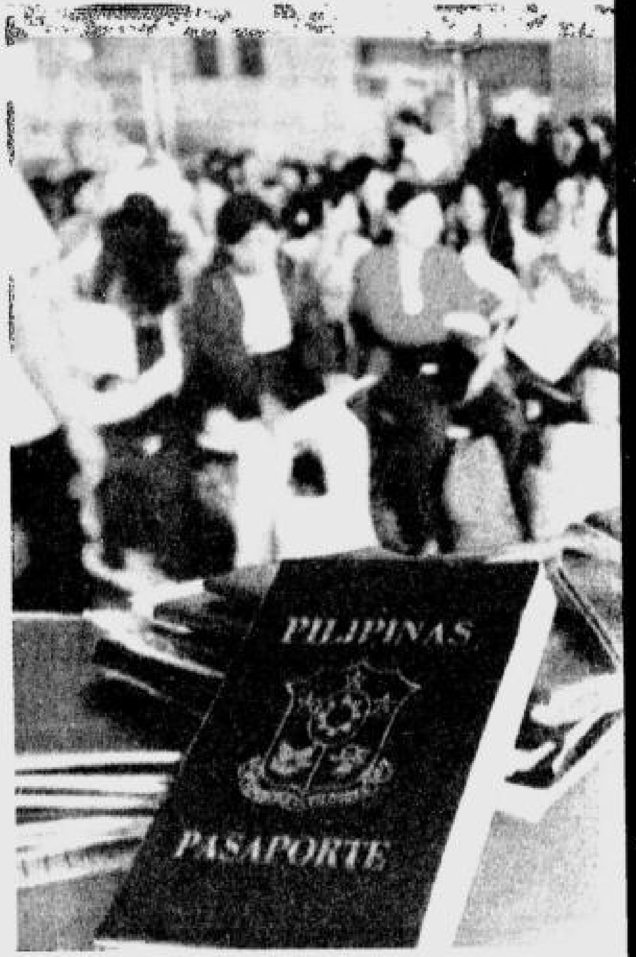
From page A1

Israel so far, a Khaibar-1 rocket on Wednesday landed near the town of Beit Shean, about 70 km south of the Lebanese border. Israel, which claims the rocket is Iranian-made, confirmed the hit but said it caused no injuries.

This was the second time guerrillas used the Khaibar-1—named after the site of a historic battle between Islam's Prophet Muhammad and Jewish tribes in the Arabian peninsula. The first time was Friday, hitting the Israeli town of Afula.

Israel said the Khaibar-1 rocket was a renamed, Iranian-made Fajr-5. The Khaibar-1 has the capability to hit Tel Aviv's northern outskirts, packing four times the power and range of a Katyusha rocket.

The latest violence shattered a partial lull in Israeli aerial bombardment in the conflict that flared after Hezbollah guerrillas killed three Israeli soldiers and seized two others in a cross-border raid on July 12. At least 646 people in Lebanon and 54 Israelis have been killed so far.



THE ORDEAL ISN'T OVER; THERE'S PAPERWORK (left

Cross-border raid

Maj. Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky, Israel's deputy chief of Army staff, told The Jerusalem Post that the Army was now working on a plan in which troops would push to the Litani river, some 20 km from the border with Israel, but could go beyond it.

Thousands of reservists, called up over the weekend, are also gathering at staging areas on the Israeli side of the border, ready to join the battles and extend the range of the invasion.

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert told Reuters in an interview the Army would keep fighting Hezbollah in south Lebanon until international peacekeepers arrived.

MUSLIMS RALLY in front of the Israel Embassy in Makati City to protest the continuing attacks in southern Lebanon. REM ZAMORA

ISRAEL
BUTCHER of

Olmert said he wanted the international force mandated to enforce a UN resolution calling for Hezbollah to be disarmed, adding that Israel had already destroyed much of the Shiite Islamist group's military capacity.

"If indeed, as we hope, the international force will be an effective force made of combat units, then we will be able to stop fire when the international force will be on the ground in the south part of Lebanon," Olmert said.

Asked if that meant Israel would carry on fighting until then, he said: "Yes."

Israel is seeking to damage Hezbollah as much as it can before diplomacy ends the war. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said a ceasefire could be reached within days, but the UN Security Council has yet to agree on a mandate for any international force.

And in another big setback to diplomatic efforts, France said it would not attend a meeting of potential troop contributors at the United Nations in New York on Thursday.

France has been touted to lead the international force, but it wants a truce and an agreement on a framework for a permanent ceasefire before any troops deploy. That is at odds with the US-Israeli view that the ceasefire can wait until the force moves in.

Mixed signals

Sending mixed signals on the duration and scale of its offensive in Lebanon, Israel already has sent at least 6,000 armored troops across the border to tackle Hezbollah guerrillas.

Lebanese security sources reported fierce battles on five fronts in the south on Wednesday. Israeli artillery fire pounded frontier villages as tank-led forces pushed in.

Guerrillas fought back with mortars, antitank rockets and machine guns. Hezbollah said it had destroyed four tanks and a military bulldozer. The Israeli Army had no immediate comment.

Fighting raged for four hours around Baalbek in eastern Lebanon after the Israelis landed near a previously evacuated Hezbollah-run hospital, supported by helicopters firing missiles and heavy machine guns.

The Israeli Army said commandos seized five suspected Hezbollah militants before returning safely to base. Hezbollah denied any of its militants were taken.

It was the first helicopter-borne assault deep inside Lebanon in the conflict.

13 civilians killed

At least 13 civilians were also killed when Israeli warplanes hit Jammaliyeh, a village near Baalbek, where five family members were found in the rubble of their house, security sources said.

Another family of five died in a strike on the village of Saath. One motorist was killed by a strike in Hermel to the north.

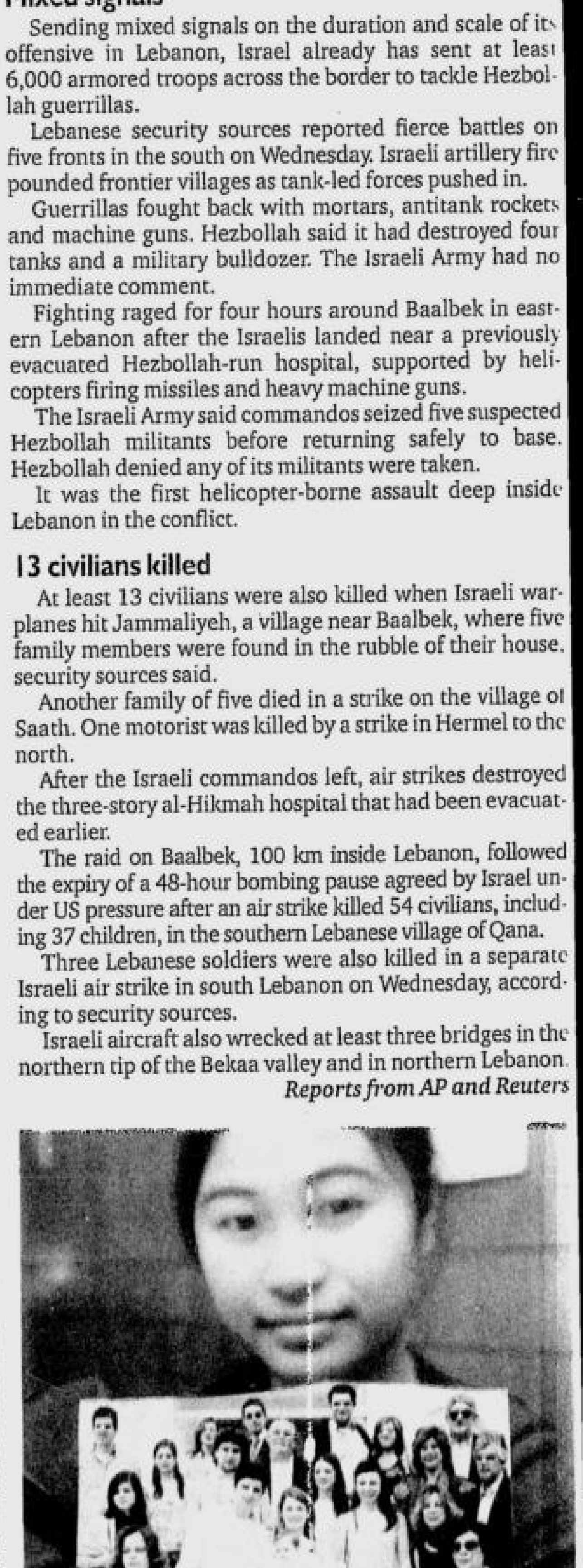
After the Israeli commandos left, air strikes destroyed the three-story al-Hikmah hospital that had been evacuated earlier.

The raid on Baalbek, 100 km inside Lebanon, followed the expiry of a 48-hour bombing pause agreed by Israel under US pressure after an air strike killed 54 civilians, including 37 children, in the southern Lebanese village of Qana.

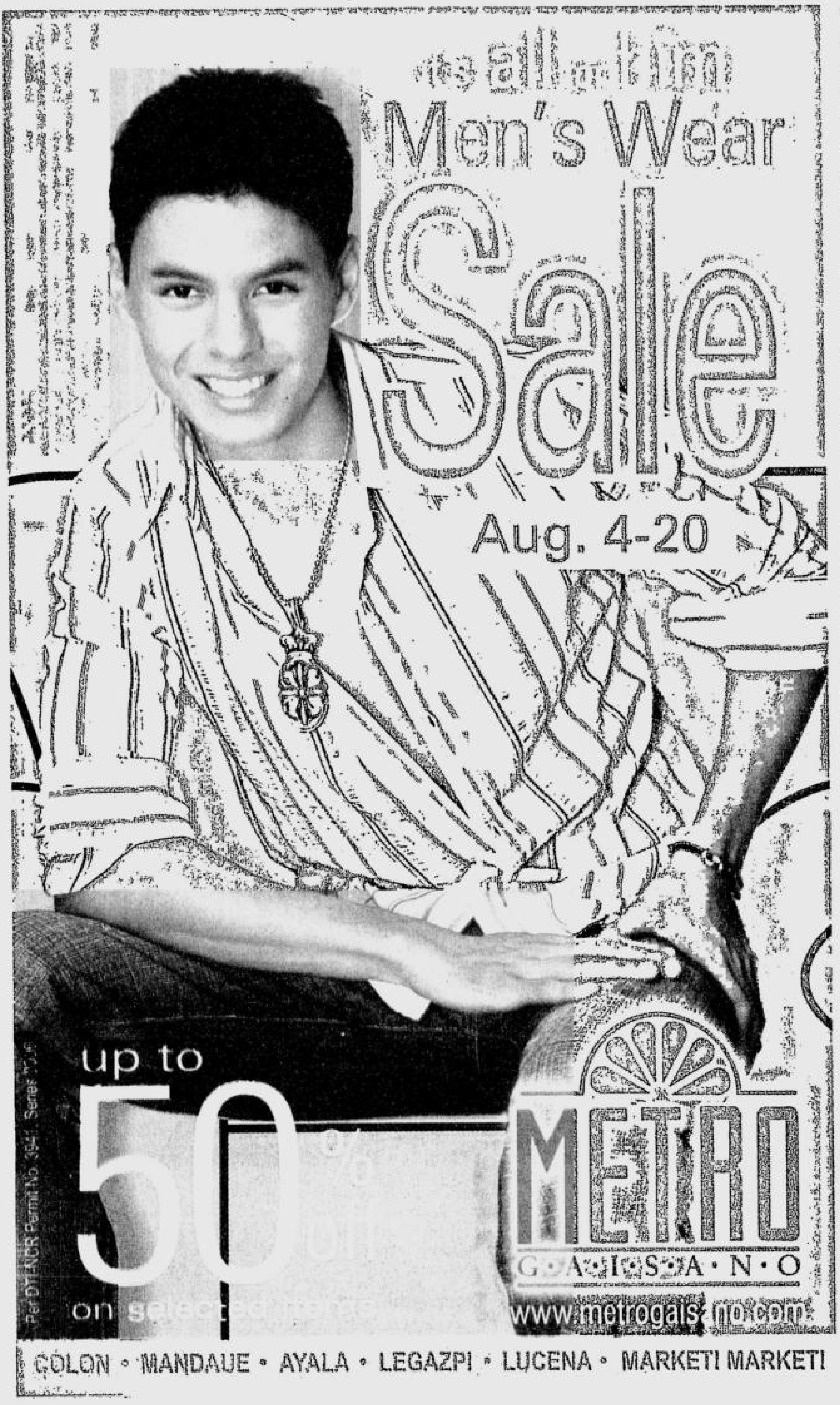
Three Lebanese soldiers were also killed in a separate Israeli air strike in south Lebanon on Wednesday, according to security sources.

Israeli aircraft also wrecked at least three bridges in the northern tip of the Bekaa valley and in northern Lebanon.

Reports from AP and Reuters



FAMILY photo of her employer: Remedios Sampiano from Maguindanao says, "I clean their pool, do I still have to look after a turtle?" ERIK ARAZAS



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to be done and a mess of luggage to attend to as the OFWs arrive at the Naia from Lebanon via a bus trip to Damascus, Syria, where they took a plane for the long trip home. These are the lucky ones. JESS YUSON

Palace, Senate headed for another standoff–Joker

SENATORS YESTERDAY WARNED THAT THE REfusal by President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration to participate in their inquiry into preparations for the evacuation of Filipinos in Lebanon could trigger another constitutional standoff between Malacañang and the legislature.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita has indicated that despite a Senate subpoena, department heads would again skip the labor committee's next hearing on Monday because they were preoccupied with the evacuation out of Lebanon, the senators said.

"What happens if the executive officials refuse to attend? Will the Senate cite them for contempt?" Sen. Joker Arroyo said. "The Executive and the Senate are headed for another Executive-Senate standoff."

"It's unfortunate, and the Senate leadership must be able to assert its prerogative to inquire into this in aid of legislation. Otherwise we can't work anymore," he said.

'Uncalled for'

Ermita's attitude, he added, was "uncalled for" since the Supreme Court had already thrown out the gag rule, Executive Order No. 464, and had decided that Congress could require the presence of officials in hearings in aid of legislation under the constitutional principle of checks and balances.

In refusing to attend the hearing last Monday, Ermita said the Senate invitation neither specified the law to be enacted nor the questions to be asked—procedures outlined in the court's landmark ruling.

Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. said he expected Labor Secretary Arturo Brion, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr., Foreign Undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr., Overseas Workers Welfare Administrator Marianito Roque, Philippine Overseas Employment Administrator Rosalinda Baldoz and Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor to appear at Monday's hearing.

'Owwa owes OFWs explanation'

"Once and for all, this issue should be straightened out. Owwa owes us, especially the OFWs, an explanation," Villar said.

"If they are invited to a hearing, they should at least show up. They are still accountable to the Senate as a whole."

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OPINION

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No end to killings

EDITORIAL

JUST 10 WEEKS. THAT'S THE DEADLINE PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has set for law enforcement agencies to solve at least 10 killings where leftist activists and journalists of various political stripes were the victims. During a Cabinet meeting in Malacañang Tuesday, Ms Arroyo was reported to have condemned "in the strongest possible term" the spate of murders during her term. Mercifully, she didn't follow it up with praises for someone who has been blamed for some of those killings, like she did in her State of the Nation Address last week.

In her Sona, the President first singled out for praise Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan, commander of the Philippine Army's 7th Division, saying he would "never retreat until he shall have freed the villages (in Central Luzon) from the night of terror" brought about by the communist insurgency. Then without missing a beat, she added: "In the harshest possible terms, I condemn political killings." She seemed to have forgotten—or simply ignored—the fact that Palparan himself has been accused of clamping down a reign of terror that left several leftists dead everywhere he went, from Mindoro to Eastern Visayas and now Central Luzon.

Even granting that she is sincere this time, the families of the victims shouldn't begin counting the days when they will finally see justice done. Since the first day of the Arroyo administration, 244 leftists and 47 journalist have been killed. Given a schedule of 10 cases every 10 weeks, the last cases will be solved barely two months before Ms Arroyo finishes her term. But that is assuming that the country has seen the last of extrajudicial executions and both the police and the Department of Justice will keep the timetable laid out by the President.

Apparently, some officials do not believe she is really serious. Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said they would "try" to meet the deadline, but warned that their efforts would be "hampered by many factors, like the attitude of lawyers." The spokesman of the Philippine National Police said they would "do their best," but quickly added that luck and the cooperation of witnesses would be critical. "The other part of the equation is the support of witnesses," he said. Thus, even before they get started, the agencies assigned to get to the bottom of these cases are already making excuses.

As to stopping the killings any time soon, that would require a rethinking of policies, particularly the "all-out war" on communist rebels that the President announced earlier this year. That announcement has been interpreted by some anti-communist vigilantes as a license to murder. And they seem to have grown bolder with every killing that remains unsolved.

Only last Monday, two activists and one journalist were shot and killed within a span of two hours. Alice Omengan-Claver, a Bayan Muna coordinator, was killed by gunmen in two vans as she and her husband were driving their 7-year-old daughter to school in Tabuk, Kalinga, at 6:45 in the morning. Her husband, Dr. Constancio Claver, chair of Bayan Muna's provincial chapter, took three bullets but survived. In Sorsogon, Rei Mon Guran, a second year college student and provincial spokesman of the League of Filipino Students, was shot to death by a lone gunman inside a bus bound for Legazpi. Prudencio Melendres, a tabloid photographer, was shot by four men in a narrow alley in Malabon, Metro Manila. Melendres was a cousin of reporter Albert Orsolino, who was murdered in May. Personal vendetta is being suspected in both cases.

Interestingly while Melendres' killers wore hoods, the assassins who murdered Claver and Guran didn't even bother to hide their faces. In Guran's case in particular, as in an increasing number of cases, it seems that the assassin struck at the first opportunity, regardless of how many people witnessed the murder. It was as if he was certain that he would never be caught or punished even if a dozen witnesses would testify against him.

In these cases, the finger points directly at persons in authority, for who can guarantee such impunity credibly except those who are in power? And with the number of "salvagings" and assassinations rising quickly and arrests lagging badly, can the Left be blamed for suspecting that such extrajudicial executions are not only being tolerated but encouraged by an administration that has fallen hostage to the military?

The best the nation can hope for after the President's announcement is that 10 cases will be declared solved in the next 10 weeks. After that, everything will be forgotten. And still there will be no end to the killings.

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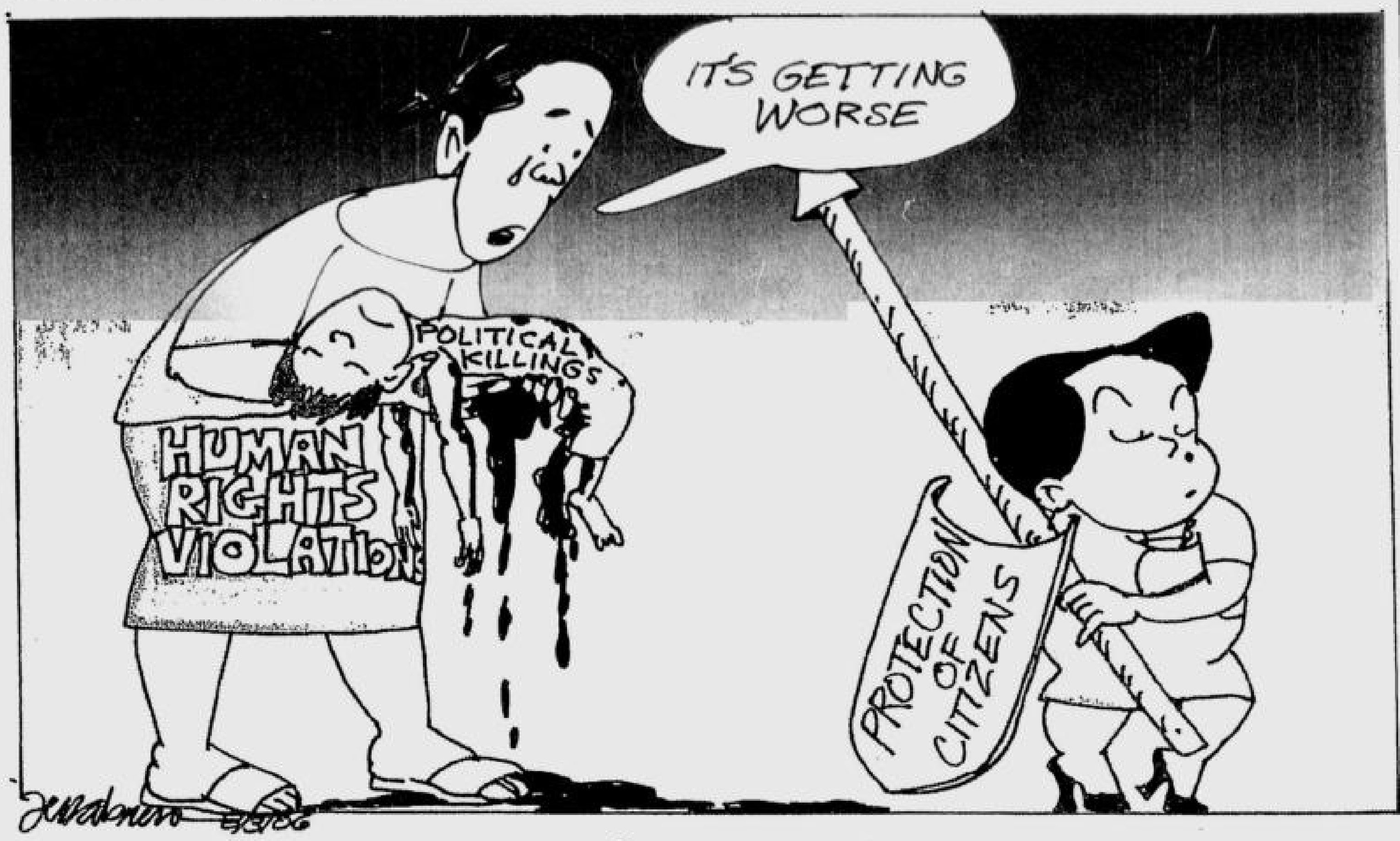

Defining trait

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"IF ONE TELLS THE TRUTH, ONE IS SURE, sooner or later, to be found out," Oscar Wilde wrote in 1894. And in 2006, the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation declared that truth-seeking was the defining trait in Eugenia Duran-Apostol's career, over half a century, as writer, editor and publisher.

The INQUIRER's founding chair set "a courageous example in placing the truth-telling press at the center of the struggle for democratic rights and better government," the RMAF said. It named Ms Apostol this year's awardee for journalism, literature and creative communication arts.

Ms Apostol becomes the 48th journalist to join this select group since 1958, the year the foundation gave its first awards. The RMAF named Indonesia's Mochtar Lubis and Philippine Free Press publisher Robert McCulloch Dick as the first awardees that year. In their publications, both took head on governments and officials who "were economical with truth."

Following President Ramon Magsaysay's death in a 1957 plane crash, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, with government concurrence, established the awards. They seek to perpetuate the late president's example of "integrity in government, courageous service to the people, and pragmatic idealism within a democratic society."

Over the last 49 years, the award—dubbed as the Nobel Prize of Asia—went to Asian individuals and organizations.

The five categories and some winners were: (a) government service—the late Presidential Commission on Good Government Chair Haydee Yorac; (b) public service—Red Cross blood bank campaigner Rosa Rosal; (c) community leadership—Thailand's Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn; (d) journalism—Nick Joaquin and Sri Lanka's Tarzie Vittachi; (e) peace and international understanding—Mother Teresa, Corazon Aquino, Press Foundation of Asia. In 2000, the RMAF announced a sixth category: "Emergent Leadership."

Ms Apostol "joined a few brave others in publishing articles openly critical of the dictatorship" despite the risks involved. Her magazine carried reports and photographs of Sen. Benigno Aquino's assassination—when censored newspapers suppressed the story. As millions poured into the streets to join or watch the Aquino funeral, for example, Times-Journal bannered a story: "Lightning Strikes Man in Luneta."

"A citizenry, hungry for truth, snapped up copies (of the magazine published by Ms Apostol) by the hundreds of thousands. As the political crisis deepened, she rose to meet the need for an independent newspaper. Leading the Philippine Daily Inquirer until 1994, she built the PDI's reputation for integrity, fearlessness and independence."

That's not a house ad. It is part of the foundation's citation which goes on to say: "Responding to President (Joseph) Estrada's assaults on press freedom, and to the public's clamor for truth about his unexplained wealth and wayward ways," Ms Apostol continued publishing.

What underpins all these is a reality that those in power often forget. Frustrating the search for truth—by oppression as Ferdinand Marcos did, by suborning as Joseph Estrada tried, or by threatening as President Macapagal-Arroyo attempted—backfires. It fails because people will not settle for anything less than the truth. In their guts, they sense that their chances for a humane life, in a free society, are ensured only if the search for truth is untrammeled.

"Truth is the hardest thing in the world to pin down," New York Times reporter Flora Lewis once wrote. "The striving for truth constitutes the grail of our profession .... And the one certainty is the awesome penalty exacted, sooner or later, from a society whose (journalists) stop trying."

Ms Apostol did not stop trying. She worked in an industry that had been aptly called "controlled chaos."

"We start each day with blank pages," the Miami-Herald points out. "And the paper is never the same twice."

Yet, despite the ever-shifting scene, there is the never-changing demand on journalists for values that endure: accuracy, fairness, context, a sense of the ethical—and less of arrogance, plus depth. These help create an atmosphere of relevant reporting from a plurality of voices.

These values run like a thread through the work of Magsaysay journalism awardees. Amitabaha Chowdhury wielded incisive investigative reporting skills against massive corruption in his native Calcutta, the 1961 citation says. That echoes in the 2003 award given to Shiela Coronel for her "groundbreaking collaborative effort (in the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism) to develop investigative journalism as a critical component of democratic discourse."

In 1999, the foundation cited Fr. James Reuter, SJ, for his work to instill ethical values, and uphold democratic values, despite efforts to gag him. That resounds in the 1999 award given to BusinessWorld's Raul Locsin who, by unsullied integrity, nurtured business reporting from infancy to robust maturity.

To that legacy, add now Ms Apostol's sterling example, which is badly needed by this troubled craft—"vocation" was the word preferred by Nobel Laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez. It is threatened by assassination, economic stress as well as our own flaws. Press freedom can be killed by a thousand cuts of tawdry sloppiness as well as by sleaze. Indeed, the media institution's enemies can be those of its own household.

* * *

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Before and after

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I GOT THIS LETTER IN MY E-MAIL, SENT TO the INQUIRER editor in chief by PhilHealth:

"We wish to emphasize that there is no truth to what Mr. De Quiros claimed that the P530M was transferred by the Owwa to PhilHealth in 2004 for 'patent electoral purposes.' In fact, the said amount was transferred to us only in March 2005, long after the national elections in 2004. The first tranche worth P300M was transferred on March 16 and the second and final tranche worth P230M was transferred on April 15."

The letter is signed by Lorna Fajardo, acting president and CEO. The rest of her letter enumerates the things PhilHealth has done for the OFWs since their Medicare funds were entrusted to it. "We invite Mr. De Quiros to visit us at his convenience so that we can show him our records pertaining to the transfer of the Owwa Medicare funds."

I have no need to visit your office at my convenience or inconvenience. I am absolutely certain your records will bear out the fact that you received the checks only last year. Accounting hat tricks are the easiest thing to do in this country. None of that supports your argument that, one, Owwa Medicare funds were not used for purposes other than what they were intended, which was health care for the OFWs, and, two, that they were in fact used to fund GMA's campaign. If anything in my contention is wrong, it is probably only the word "patent." The use of Owwa money by PhilHealth to campaign for GMA wasn't just patent, it was blatant.

The very proposal for the transfer of the funds was premised on it. The proof of it is quite literally in black and white. The proposal was made by Francisco Duque, then president and CEO of PhilHeath, on Nov. 20, 2002. He said in a memo to GMA: "Respectfully submitted herewith for her Excellency's consideration is an Executive Order which shall effect the transfer of the medicare functions and the health insurance funds from the Owwa to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp .... The rationale for the transfer is discussed at length in the attached Executive Brief."

That brief gets to the heart of the matter: "It is respectfully requested that the proposed EO be approved by her Excellency before the year ends. **The proposed transfer will have a significant bearing on 2004 elections** .... May I ask that we meet personally? My direct line is 09178132072 or 6181684."

I can only hope Duque hasn't yet changed numbers so the OFWs can tell him what they think of what he did.

But there you have it straight from the horse's mouth—my profoundest apologies to horses. Duque's justification for the fund transfer is about as innocent as GMA's conversation with Garci. Of course, the part about it having a significant bearing on the 2004 elections can always be bent to suit harmless interpretations. GMA's own conversations with Garci have undergone that metamorphosis. The part where Garci tells GMA "*'yun hong pagpapataas sa inyo…maayos po naman ang gawa nila*" has been interpreted facetiously as Garci telling GMA that the shoemakers who made her elevator shoes did a good job.

Fortunately for Duque, he realized that things written down on paper can be very incriminating and decided to leave further explanations verbally in private. Unfortunately for GMA, she never realized how phone conversations with "a Comelec official" can be very incriminating and called up Garci again and again.

GMA did sign the EO—numbered 182—not before the end of 2002 as Duque suggested but shortly thereafter, on Feb. 14, 2003, well **before** the May 2004 elections. And the Owwa passed Resolution No. 005 "approving the transfer of P530,382,446 from the Owwa Medicare Fund to PhilHealth" on Feb. 2, 2004, still well **before** the May elections. Corazon Carsola, the only land-based representative who refused to sign the resolution, said shortly later on March 15, 2004: "Since the start, I have always been against the transfer of the Medical Fund to PhilHealth. I feared that transferring the fund to a business-oriented entity would in the long run prove detrimental to the future of medical services to the OFWs."

She was right. The transfer proved detrimental to the OFWs' physical health even as it proved beneficial to GMA's political one. Owwa stopped the medical reimbursements of OFWs on Jan. 16, 2004. The dating of the checks, which was after the elections, and the amount, which is P530,000, do not exculpate PhilHealth, they only laud the efforts of the migrant groups to expose the iniquity. Duque's original request was for the entire P4 billion Owwa Medicare fund. That met with violent protests from the migrant groups and several lawmakers, which led to the amount being scaled down. As to the checks landing in PhilHealth's coffers only after the elections, they can say anything they want but EO 182 and Owwa Resolution 005 guaranteed them the money well **before** the elections.

The final proof of the pudding is in the eating. Or specifically in this case in the completely inedible cards that PhilHealth issued voters before the elections. Indeed **before** the official campaign period, a patent—there's that word again—violation of election rules, though that would be the last thing to bother them. Unlike before, where PhilHealth cards did not carry the picture of any politician, the cards that were handed out **before** the official campaign period carried the picture of GMA cradling an infant. You wondered who the beneficiary was since GMA dwarfed the recipient—by itself a feat worthy of Ripley's—until you realized that indeed the card accurately depicted its true beneficiary.

But as Burns says, the best laid plots of mice and (wo)men oft go astray. Sublimely ironically, all this went for naught. In the end, GMA still had to hello Garci.

Turf war

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

IT'S INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT THE QUESTION about the funds for the evacuation of our OFWs from Lebanon cropped up not because they were missing but simply because of "turf war." Apparently the officials responsible for our OFWs' welfare feel they ought to control the funds. But there's also the thinking that the Philippine ambassador to Lebanon should be on top of the situation, and this also means control of the funds. Such clash between the two entities seems to be recurring in times of crisis and emergency abroad. The relationship should be better defined.

* * *

Last Sunday, at the dzRH program I co-host with Cecile Alvarez, Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda disclosed that the targets and goals set by President Macapagal-Arroyo in her State of the Nation Addresses are being monitored yearly by a House oversight committee—for proper implementation. This major committee was set up by Speaker Jose de Venecia in 2001 with Salceda as its first chair. Salceda said the executive agencies involved are properly advised about this, and the committee's findings are inputted into a scoreboard, for possible assistance in remedial legislation, etc. Salceda seemed generally pleased with the Sonas' favorable scores. This year, the oversight committee—now chaired by Quezon Rep. Danilo Suarez—may feel truly challenged as there's a good deal of skepticism about the availability of funds for the infrastructure projects in the "super regions."

* * *

Salceda, who has been criticized for being overly optimistic about the availability of funds, regards this year's Sona as the "*pinaka-concreto.*" It's not anymore just about GMA's promise to reduce poverty but how she will do it. He asserted that the P290 billion targeted for infrastructure spending is "just a snapshot" of the Medium-Term Development Goal and is "modest, realistic and has an absorptive capacity." Right now, he said, infrastructure spending is less than 2 percent of GDP, but by 2010, government hopes to spend 4.85 percent—still small compared to Vietnam's 8 percent, but much better.

As Salceda explained, the super regions will rely on their "natural complementarity or communality." For instance, the Northern Luzon area, next-door to Taiwan, is envisioned like FVR's BIMP-EAGA in the south with its few trade barriers. The second region—the triangle of Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Calabarzon—controls 55 percent of GDP, which shows an unhealthy imbalance; dominated by Subic-Clark now, it aims to develop another major corridor between Batangas and Lucena.

* * *

Salceda admitted that the success of the super-region concept would depend a lot on the leaders who would administer them, what he called the "binding force." It would also need the close monitoring of corruption.

As to whether or not there are funds, as I see it, the development of the regions won't be accomplished overnight; hence, the funds—projected to come from the national government, local governments, BOT and government corporations—don't have to be in all at once. The thing is to get the projects started; success scored at each stage will be their best advertisement, to draw subsequent funds and convert cynics into believers. As former Health Secretary Johnny Flavier used to say, "Just DOH it."

* * *

Star columnist Dick Pascual recently opined that the biggest problem of new Senate President Manuel Villar is not how to pass certain critical bills or how to co-exist with President Arroyo, but how to protect the Senate from the threat of extinction through Charter change. I quite agree, but the Senate has no one but itself to blame for the increasingly popular perception that the country will be better off with a unicameral legislature. In addition to the gargantuan expense of maintaining the Senate, it has been perceived in the past few years as an obstructionist chamber with a keen penchant for investigation, but very little propensity to pass critical and major bills. Analysts compute that the few bills passed by the Senate cost the taxpayers about P800 million each. At the moment, the 2006 budget is still up in the air and this month could see a first in our history—two annual budgets catching up with each other.

* * *

Then too, during the joint session of Congress last July 24, the House, as the site of the President's Sona, was preoccupied with coordinating with the military and police in securing the Batasan complex against a possible coup. In addition, House leaders and personnel had to coordinate with the Palace the issuance of 3,000 invitations, physical preparation of the building, the buffet *merienda* and a host of other details. The senators' only role was to show up, but, one House official grumbled, only nine senators came. Note that it's part of their job description to be in the House for the Sona, regardless of how they feel toward the Palace occupant. How the senators vote on a bill is their business, but they're being paid by taxpayers to attend the opening joint session. No wonder the Senate is becoming irrelevant.

* * *

Carmelito Anzures, spokesperson of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, took strong exception to allegations raised here that "all sorts of tactics" were employed to thwart the verification of signatures for the people's initiative in that city. He said Sigaw ng Bayan's claim of harassment is "laughable," a cover-up for its failure to get the required 3 percent in Makati. Anzures claimed that the verification process at the local Comelec has uncovered forged signatures while some Makati residents have denounced alleged efforts to bribe a number of them into signing the Cha-cha initiative. He asked that "circumspection be exercised" in reporting harassment claims, especially when a source of information is "a political player in Makati whose conviction for libel was affirmed by the Supreme Court."

Environmental group sounds alarm

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WHAT IS WRONG WITH THIS PIECE OF NEWS? What is wrong with this picture?

Not so long ago, the Manila Bulletin came out with a report that The Fuhua Group of China has broken ground in Silang, Cavite. It launched the "first of 500 technology demonstration and industrial processing sites that will be put up in the Philippines over the next five years."

The industrial site will run under the Philippine Fuhua Sterling Agricultural Corp. (PFSAC) and is part of what is called a programmed production from a corn-sorghum facility from which will come ethanol and other by-products such as milky starch livestock feed, corn protein, corn oil and amino acid.

According to the article by Melody M. Aguiba, the ethanol supply from the integrated plants is apparently aimed at beefing up China's ethanol requirement in its intensive drive to shift to cheaper and renewable biofuel as alternative to dwindling crude oil. China is also stepping up production in Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and Laos.

"Renewable biofuel as alternative to crude oil" sounds great at first as compared with fossil fuel with its pollutive effects. Plants are good because they could be grown in big quantities and made to multiply.

And listen to what one of the people behind the project said. "This is a two-hectare processing plant that will have laboratories for hybrid corn and hybrid sorghum. We'll construct one like this in 500 sites all over the country."

The article further said: "The PFSAC project involves planting of hybrid corn on a total of one million hectares over the next five years that will produce a huge 18.2 million MT of corn after three years. Hybrid sweet sorghum, which yields eight to 10 MT per hectare using planting materials from China compared to the traditional yield of two to three MT per hectare, will also be planted together with the hybrid corn."

Now, what is this hybrid corn?

Lingkod Tao-Kalikasan (LTK), an environmental group, has issued an alarm on this corn. This hybrid corn could be Bt corn. "What at first appears as good news is truly alarming," says Sr. Aida Velasquez, OSB, LTK coordinator. "In several instances from North to South, farmers got hybrid corn which has turned out to be Bt corn."

Velasquez warns against "the invasion of GM (genetically modified) crops in the country." One of the questions she poses is: how adequate and effective are regulatory and monitoring mechanisms for GMOs (genetically modified organisms)?

A lot has been written about and against Bt corn. Scientists have been warning against gene contamination such as what happened in Spain where GM maize was planted on 32,000 hectares of land. Not only was there contamination, the livelihood of farmers was threatened and agricultural biodiversity was undermined.

Velasquez asks: "How can our farmers survive if a lot of the native varieties of crops would be contaminated by GM crops? What will happen to our local varieties of corn, and later, rice, banana, papaya, abaca, eggplant and mongo?"

As the news report said, while the technology demonstration site for corn-sorghum in Silang may involve only 15 hectares, actual corn sites in other parts of the country, including Isabela, Nueva Ecija and Camarines Sur may cover 100 hectares in each province.

Planting will soon start and after the harvest, an ethanol plant may be constructed near the corn fields. Investment in each ethanol plant may range from P5 to P6 billion, the report said. All that investment will need infrastructure support for which Fuhua may enter into a build-operate-transfer scheme with the Philippine government. Fuhua, the report said, owns the world's second largest corn processing facility after the one in the United States; and it supplies 60 percent of China's huge corn demand.

Big investments may mean big number of jobs but at what cost—cost that the future generations might have to pay because of the environmental disaster that could happen?

Greenpeace has come out with a report titled "The Economics of Bt corn in the Philippines." It says that Bt corn in the Philippines was designed to be resistant to the Asiatic corn borer, one of the most destructive corn pests hereabouts. Bt corn has also been presented as a practical and ecologically sustainable solution that would help poor corn farmers improve the crop yields.

But, Greenpeace argues, Bt corn is definitely not a biological means of controlling pests and is not ecologically sustainable. Why? Because genetically modified or engineered organisms are unpredictable. When released to the environment, they produce unexpected results that could prove damaging in the long term.

But what is the alternative? Synchronized planting by farmers with adjacent farms is a method that could prevent heavy corn borer attacks per farm. Planting during the dry season is another way. Detasselling is another. This means taking out 75 percent of the tassel (the corn borer's primary food source) per field.

Bt corn could also result in soil toxification and pest resistance.

Corn is indeed an amazing plant. It has fed and moved civilizations, it has been part of society's evolution since the dawn of time. And now it is no longer just food, it has great potential as fuel. What is worrisome is that with humans tinkering with its biological integrity, it might just strike back.

* * *

Watch "Catch a Dream," a fund-raising concert by Joe Mari Chan for a school that admits poor students who cannot pay at the Meralco Theater at 7:30 p.m. on Aug. 5. For tickets call 4613278, 9394714, 4272703, 0916-3893320, 0927-8488400.

* * *

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Gov't power, not people power

(Conclusion)

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

WHAT WOULD MAKE A PEOPLE'S INITIATIVE possible granting it represents a marvelously democratic opportunity for the electorate to directly propose policy and even legislation? In the case, for example, of my idea to directly propose, on a province-by-province basis, a resolution that could either be accepted by provincial boards or—failing that—be voted on in provincial plebiscites, what would the effort require?

Several things need to happen. First, not only must ordinary citizens file such a resolution without being molested; faced by hostile provincial and national officials, they must be able to campaign for their advocacy. Second, the Comelec must be free from official interference and pressure; it must also have the credibility to properly verify signatures and hold a plebiscite. Third, the Palace and provincial leaders must not use the military and police or goons and money to subvert the process. Fourth, even if a majority of the provinces ended up expressing no confidence in the administration, there'd be no guarantee it would listen. Fifth, it would require a gigantic amount of money, an enormous number of people and organizational skills not even the best organized of NGOs could ever hope to muster.

That is, if a national effort and outcome are to be desired from a people's initiative and referendum. The Constitution's provisions, as given life (partially) by the law, make it possible enough at the level of individual provinces. It is hoped that since the parts concerning legislation on a provincial basis were left unaffected by the Supreme Court's ruling on the law's validity concerning proposals for constitutional amendments, the process would have to be harnessed by the local electorates to engage provincial governments more fully.

My personal feeling though, after encountering the dizzying logistics a nationally oriented initiative and referendum would require, is that aside from the defects of the initiative and referendum law (as determined by the Supreme Court), we have a case of a constitutionally mandated process made highly impractical by Congress. Although not the only constitutional policy essentially made meaningless by Congress: for example, there's the non-existent anti-dynasty law that national and local officials have made sure would never be passed.

It's clear, however, that regardless of the Charter's intent to give the public a means to take the initiative in changing our Constitution, the rules serve as an obstacle. But even if the obstacle isn't there, the Constitution grants the public the right to propose changes only in terms of specific provisions. This is what was meant when the Supreme Court said the people may propose amendments, but not revisions, to the Constitution. For example, a public fed up with "plurality presidents"—meaning, just the highest vote-getter, not elected by at least 50 percent of the electorate—may propose an amendment to establish run-off elections for the presidency. Then, if none of the presidential candidates gets at least 50 percent of the votes, the top two will have to run against each other. This is precisely what the Indonesians, more sensible than our current crop of leaders, recently did.

A larger, more comprehensive series of changes to the Constitution, in the eyes of our basic law, is best done through Congress proposing the changes, or a constitutional convention being called for the purpose. The logic of such a distinction, it seems to me, is clear: such changes would require greater focus and debate, and a different means for achieving consensus.

That explains why the current, patently administration-flavored "people's initiative" is opposed even by people who took pride in the inclusion of the initiative and referendum innovation in the present Constitution. First of all, the law is the law, and unless otherwise decided, the Supreme Court says the law is defective. Second, even if the law were fully operational, only specific amendments, and not a broad series of revisions, can be initiated. And most important of all, to my mind: the idea of initiative and referendum was meant to institutionalize people power, not administration power. For a sitting government to support a "people's initiative"—not only morally but also financially and logistically—is to fail to understand that public officials are not the people the Constitution has in mind.

Why the discrimination? Does an administration not have the right to harness its powers, resources and network to propose constitutional amendments or revisions? Of course, it has that right.

How then does a government—that is, any administration or ruling coalition—put forward and lobby for the constitutional amendments it wants? By the means past administrations and their allies have done so: by proposing the amendments to the legislature, which can then submit the amendments for ratification by the people in a plebiscite. Or it can do so by calling for a constitutional convention. To pour either the government's patronage and other resources or to throw its weight behind the advocacy for constitutional changes, through the mechanism of a people's initiative, is to debase the people's initiative as conceived by our Constitution. In a democracy, the people are the ultimate judge, particularly when they express their opinions in an election or a plebiscite.

The ultimate absurdity of any election or referendum held in a controlled and blatantly illegal manner was exposed with the sham "approval" of the 1973 Constitution and the bogus martial law "plebiscites." The spirit and intent of a process and its rules as widely understood and accepted, must be respected: Democracy isn't a winner-take-all contest, particularly if winning requires setting aside the rules to which everyone ought to be committed.

The question

YOUNG BLOOD

Lany A. dela Cruz

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO, I RECEIVED A TEXT MESSAGE from a close friend. She was asking me to do her a big favor for a big event. Normally, I would have answered immediately in the affirmative. But I was in a pensive mood that day, so it took a while before I decided to call her and ask if she really was ready to take the plunge. Yes, another friend is getting married and yes, I am going to be a bridesmaid again.

We met that afternoon after work. I immediately spotted her from among the crowd because she glowed like a neon sign. She excitedly recounted to me the proposal and showed to me the ring.

I was genuinely happy for her, but when I looked at my bare fingers, several things ran through my head. Although I am in a relationship, I do not see myself tying the knot soon. Just the thought of it is enough to make my brain go blank. For now, I am tied to my desk and married to my work.

I will not be a hypocrite and say that I have not passed the stage where I was practically asking my boyfriend every day when he is going to marry me. It led to a few fights between us because he said he has to achieve his goals first before popping the question, because I deserve a beautiful wedding. Eventually I stopped asking, not because I got tired but because, after hearing the same answer over and over again, his philosophy seemed to have rubbed off on me.

I have been a bridesmaid at my friends' weddings and I have also dreamed of wearing a gown, holding a bouquet and looking all pretty and made up as I walk down the aisle. But wedding invitations seem to have become rare lately, and I am beginning to wonder if there are more of us now.

While watching the news some time last month, my interest was struck by a report that the Philippine birth rate is going down. I thought it was interesting, and not because this seemed impossible but because of the main reason cited: more and more women are choosing to postpone marriage for the sake of their careers. I can relate with them. I have realized that while I am young (although that is relative), I want to pursue my career goals and do things which will be difficult to do once I become somebody's wife. I have told myself that I must be occupying a particular position before I reach a specific age, earning this amount every month, with X amount in my bank account and my life insurance fully paid. I believe that marriage is not an end in itself but a prelude to a lifetime of responsibilities not only to my husband but also to my children. And I want to be prepared and equipped when I assume the role of wife and mother—emotionally, mentally, psychologically, physically, professionally.

Don't get me wrong. I have nothing against those who have gotten married already or are planning to get married soon, but I am speaking for myself and for the single women of my generation who choose to marry late. In these times when the number of people who cannot afford to have three decent meals a day is rising, it is but practical and logical to forego marriage until you can fearlessly say you are ready for it. I want to make sure that I have given Mum a comfortable life long after she retires from her job and that my head and that of my future husband and children will be above water (now that oil price increases are a weekly event, maybe even the knees should be, too).

I have noticed that as I get older (and wiser I hope), my perspective has changed, much to the delight of my mother. *Carpe diem.* I know that I can never have the opportunities I let pass my way, that I have to strike while the iron is hot. I am in my prime and I am resolved to make the most of it so that in the future when I look back, I will not have to wonder about the might-have-beens and the what-ifs. I want to fulfill my personal aspirations before delving into the unknown that marriage is.

I am romantic. I like to take sunset walks and read love letters. I believe that love is a beautiful thing. I definitely will not pass up being a wife and a mother. I still want to be all pretty and made up in my wedding gown and finally graduate from being a bridesmaid. I look forward to the time when I will be asked by the man I love to spend the rest of my life with him, to take a vow with him that we will be together in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, till death do us part. I want to appear so in love in my wedding pictures.

I am still a sucker for love songs, but contrary to what the Eagles said, I realize that love is not enough to keep couples alive when they are hungry and that they need to also eat and be able to afford the necessities of life. I know people who regretted because they believed love was all that matters. Falling in love can truly be hard on the knees.

This is my choice. These are the things I believe in. I may sound cynical to others, but I am in love and I am using this love to fuel my passion to reach my goals, to be a better person, to develop and grow.

My boyfriend is now happier because I do not pester him with "**the** question" every day; in fact, I do not bring it up anymore. Mum is not worried that I will rush into marriage because I told her I am not halfway through my list of things to do. So everybody's happy.

As Vincent van Gogh said, love many things, for therein lies the true strength, and whosoever loves much, performs much, and can accomplish much, and what is done in love is done well.

So yes, I will be a bridesmaid again.

Lany A. dela Cruz, 26, is a project officer of the Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao Project in Davao City.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

THEY SAID

Worst fear

"I don't want to tell my children I have not done my part. My worst fear is we are still in such a mess and I have not done my part."

—Noralyn Sharief, a member of the Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines Alumni Community, who set aside her dream of being a surgeon in big hospitals abroad to set up schools for the poor in Mindanao

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Always slow and late response

"GOV'T PLANS TO SUBSIDIZE diesel fuel in case oil hits $100 a barrel." (PDI, 7/18/06) Better if Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor had left this unsaid. His statement merely, and unnecessarily, highlighted the government's always slow and late response to national woes.

Already, everyone is reeling from the $76 per barrel price of world oil. Must government, before acting on the problem, wait to see until the price hits $100? Defensor must be joking.

Indeed, there are a number of ways by which the government can help ease the nation's sufferings from the relentless rise in oil prices. For example, it can take a cue from the P1 discount on the per-liter-price of diesel that the oil companies have voluntarily offered. Why can't it also offer its own equivalent subsidy—now, and not later?

There is reason to believe that the passage of the reformed EVAT law would have been prudently postponed had the oil prices then been soaring as they are now. Why can't government now find prudence in suspending the VAT on oil—perhaps, also on electricity—in these critical times?

Moreover, the prevailing tariff on oil should not be merely lowered; it should be totally removed.

Anywhere else, the principal purpose of tariff is to protect a country's locally produced products from imported, similar products. Simply put, we do not produce fossil oil in this country.

Admittedly, the other purpose of tariff is revenue. That is already being achieved by the many other forms of taxes that both the national and local revenue codes already slap on oil.

The revival of the defunct Oil Price Stabilization Fund is also worth considering. One recalls that its failure to stabilize oil prices during Cory Aquino's time was the result of political—more than any other—considerations.

Of course, the above propositions are tenable only if the government loosens its stingy grip on the higher revenues it craves for every budget year. The government keeps saying that it needs these revenues essentially to improve the delivery of social services.

I submit that there can be no social service that is far better, more concrete and directly beneficial to the people than using a portion of government revenues to ease the nation's sufferings from the sky-high prices of oil. For one thing, this social service is free from the tentacles of corruption, which often takes the lion's share of the budgets for other public services.

—RUDY L. CORONEL,
10 Venus St.,
Golden Country Homes,
Alangilan, Batangas City

Premature commendation of Vice President De Castro

IN NEAL CRUZ'S COLUMN LAST July 26, he commended Vice President Noli de Castro for having successfully relocated families along the SouthRail to their new "homes." Credit is in fact due to De Castro, but the commendation was a little too premature as the relocated families are in a worse situation now than when they were still along the railroad tracks—the relocation site has no electricity and no potable water; and it is near an open dump.

This past week's typhoons and incessant rains have flooded the site and water from the dump flows into houses. Since their relocation, most breadwinners have lost their jobs and have been experiencing hunger mainly due to the lack of alternative livelihood opportunities near the site.

I agree that the State of the Nation Address is indeed a wish list; but citing De Castro's "achievement" (if that is what you can call it) in relocating these families is not a good example either of good governance.

The success of these relocation programs should not be measured by the number of families that have been moved from one place to another; success should be measured by the improvement the relocation has made on the overall quality of the relocatees' lives—specifically, whether the relocation will enable them to become productive citizens of this nation.

—TANYA GAURANO,
tan_128@yahoo.com

Too much

I FELT DIZZY UPON READING the news story titled "Biggest security: 14,000 troops to guard GMA" by Dona Z. Pazzibugan. (PDI, 7/14/06) If President Macapagal-Arroyo did not look that bad in the eyes of the Filipino people, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police did not have to deploy 12,000 SAF troops, 1,000 anti-riot policemen and 1,000 soldiers to guard her. And if the President had not lied before her constituents, she would have felt uncomfortable with that number of armed guards mobilized to protect just her.

How would 14,000 policemen and soldiers know that one of them might have ill-feelings toward President Arroyo? Remember, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt was assassinated by one of his soldiers. Let us take that as a precaution amid threats to assassinate the President.

There is a saying that goes this way: "Too much of everything is dangerous." The show of force suggested some kind of braggadocio on the part of the AFP and the PNP. More often than not, such moves offend people's sensibilities.

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA SR.,
JP Rizal Street,
Barangay Camambugan,
Daet, Camarines Norte

Meritocracy: where Filipinos fail

I WOULD LIKE TO RESPOND TO the letter of Marie Franz Jeruta. (PDI, 7/20/06)

I agree with her completely: Filipinos continue to suffer from colonial mentality, particularly, a wanton admiration for everything American. I lived in the United States for 17 years; it's not the utopia that most people dream it to be. Life is tough in America. People in big cities, in order to have a good life, very rarely spend time for activities other than work. But true to their Pledge of Allegiance, they stand firm for "One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

I fully agree with Jeruta: "We should instead appreciate being Filipino." But I have to disagree with her on three points:

1. "We are the most resourceful race." Filipinos are naturally creative and imaginative people, I will give her that. But where do most of us use this craftiness? Is it to help our neighbors, help our country and uphold the good reputation of Filipinos in the international community? Many foreigners have observed that we are one of the few races that envy a countryman who has it better. Most other nationalities support each other, not pull each other down.

Filipinos are also well-known for using their resourcefulness to buck the system. I do not wonder why our country has such an unpalatable reputation abroad and why our citizens are oftentimes singled out to be checked more thoroughly in immigration lines.

2. "Respect for elders stands as the norm of our society." I have a problem with that statement right there. In the Philippines, people who have higher educational degrees, higher positions in companies, bigger bank accounts, prestigious-sounding last names and are in positions of power are accorded more respect and given preferential treatment when it comes to the rule of law.

3. "In our society, the problem of one becomes the problem of the whole family and even of the relatives." In theory, this is a good thing but unfortunately, this practice is abused in the Philippines. I have heard of countless stories of househelp working in Manila and elsewhere who support their entire families—from parents to all the siblings in the province—with a single salary. Oftentimes, when this lone breadwinner has put a brother or sister through grade school all the way through college, the brother or sister ends up unmotivated to look for a job. The dependence on another as the source of livelihood has already become the norm.

Until this country starts operating on meritocracy, where hard work, skill, experience and talent determine one's success, we as a nation, aren't going anywhere. And we will keep losing our brightest minds to companies abroad where they have a chance at moving up in the corporate ladder and getting paid commensurate to their contribution to the company. Opportunities should be open to all people who deserve them and not to the limited few who society has dictated will have access to them.

—TINA VITAS, Makati City

One Voice a lost voice on Charter change controversy

I WRITE THIS LETTER IN REPLY TO A group calling itself One Voice, which is opposing Charter change.

As we know, various groups are calling for: (1) a shift from the present presidential bicameral form of government to a parliamentary unicameral form; (2) a gradual shift from our present unitary structure of government to a federal structure; (3) a shift from the present opportunistic personality-oriented political parties to principled development-oriented political parties; and (4) a liberalization of the highly restrictive economic provisions.

In the plebiscite that the people's initiative is espousing, only one of these proposals will be presented to the people for approval or disapproval, and it is this:

Are you in favor of a shift in our form of government from presidential bicameral to parliamentary unicameral?

With the foregoing considerations, I can now answer the points raised by One Voice.

1. An amended Constitution will take away our right to vote directly for the president. Answer: Elections for president in the presidential system are expensive because they are nationwide. Only the rich or those who have the support of the rich can afford to run for president. While by physical appearance the people elect the president directly, in reality it is the rich and their powerbrokers who pre-select and elect the president.

2. An amended Constitution will create a powerful interim Parliament composed of incumbent politicians who will decide whether or not to hold the 2007 elections. A: An interim Parliament will have no power to abolish the 2007 elections for the simple reason that Parliament cannot legislate for its own benefit. The President and the Speaker have reiterated, there will be elections in 2007 as required by law.

3. An amended Constitution will create a super-president with the additional powers of the prime minister. A: In the period of 2007-2010, pending the establishment of a full Parliament, the president will have to share power with the interim prime minister because the latter has executive powers, too. If at all, the interim Parliament will diminish the powers of the presidency. Beginning 2010, the position of president will be a purely ceremonial one.

4. An amended Constitution will open the door for those in power to stay on indefinitely. A: Every citizen has the right to run for public office. If current incumbents decide to run in the 2007 elections, they will be judged by the people on their merit. No politician, least of all an undesirable one, can stay on indefinitely.

5. An amended Constitution will weaken the Supreme Court. A: The shift in government form has nothing to do with the powers of the Court which will remain the bulwark against abuses, whether these are committed by an arrogant political majority or a feeble-minded political minority.

—GONZALO M. JURADO, Ph.D.,
vice president for finance and development;
concurrently professor of economics,
Kalayaan College, Marikina City

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Thursday, August 3, 2006
IDOL
Ang Pinakamagandang Panget sa Balat ng Lupa
Betty La Fea
Gabi-gabi
ABC
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				Dream Music Videos	V League				Sentro	Worst Case Scenario	S.O.S		Wala Yan Sa Lolo Ko		Big News	Dokyu			
ABS-CBN 2		Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Zenki	Yakitate! Japan	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Kapamilya Deal Or No Deal	Bituing Walang Ningning		Sa Piling Mo	My Girl	A Love To Kill	Bandila	SOCO	Mirada De Mujer
AXN		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)				30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Pensacola (Season III)		The Amazing Race 6						Supernatural (Season 1)		Hex (Season 2)	
Cartoon Network	Pixie And Dixie	All New Popeye Show	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Winx Club	Xiaolin Showdown	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Simpsons	Samurai Jack	PokeMon	Dias	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons	Teen Titans	Justice League	The Batman	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock
Cinema One		Virtuoso		Bata, Bata Paano Ka Ginawa				D' Uragons				Batang X				Four Feathers			
Cinemax				The Guns Of Navarone					The Ticket			Psycho IV: The Beginning			Pleasantville (9:35 PM)				Dead Canaries
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	Global Challenges	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Psychic Detectives	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Cold Case				E-Ring	
Discovery Channel		Psychic Witness		Building The Biggest		Raw Nature		Deadliest Catch		The Greatest Ever		Mean Machines		Mythbusters		Building The Biggest		Power Zone	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Tutenstein	Lizzie McGuire	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN						X Games 11 - Day4 Part2				Pool Snooker Mosconi Cup 2005		Pool Snooker Mosconi Cup 2005		Sportscenter Asia	The Beautiful Century: 100 Yrs of FIFA	Asian 9-Ball Tour San Miguel			Sportscenter Asia
ETC		American Dreams 3		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Will & Grace 4	Friends 10	Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Showdog Moms & Dads		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Virtue Storybook	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	The Sacraments Through The Ages	Special Programming		EWTN Live (Encore) With Fr. Mitch Pacwa		Daily Mass		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	The Seven Sacraments	Images of Mary	Behold the Man: Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Ang Pagbabago (3:45 PM)		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Jewel In The Palace	24 Oras		Captain Barbell (7:10 PM)		Majika		I Luv NY (8:50 PM)	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Magpakailanman			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		Strong Medicine (3:15 PM)						McLeod's Daughters		Strong Medicine		Missing I		Spooks					Spooks (11:45PM)
HBO		Covert Action (3:15 PM)				For Keeps?			As Good As It Gets (6:45 PM)					Deadwood 01: Deadwood		Deadwood 02: Deep Water		Gremlins 2: The New Batch	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Shadow Of The Elves	Mission Odyssey	Rune Soldier	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Super Gals	Mission Odyssey
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		EBC Earth Files		Japan Video Topics/ Arms		Travel Philippines	Japan Video Topics/ Arms	EBC Earth Files	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Smackdown				JLU	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Everybody Hates Chris	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Get Color	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	At Home With	Barefoot Contessa	Everyday Italian	Food 911	Who's Wedding Is It Anyway?		Good Finds	Martha		Your Private Island	Genuine Article	E! True Hollywood Story	
MTV Philippines		Punk'D	Laguna Beach		MTV Hits					Get Spotted		TRL		Punk'D	Laguna Beach				
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX News	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Presents		MYX Bandarito	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Megastructures		Naked Science: Atlantis		Top 5 - Volcano		WOW! Cliffhangers: King of The Cliffs		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Megastructures: Itaipu Dam		Naked Science: Shark Attacks	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas.			Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ Ka. Lando & Angelina Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Net 25	INC Chronicles	Convergence	Auto Motor Sport	The Planet	Tomorrow Today	Ang Tamang Daan		News Beat (Live)		Openline (Live)	Gabay Sa Kalusugan	INC Chronicles E	INC Chronicles F	Ang Pagbubunyag		World Report	Kapatid Sa Hanapbuhay	DWTV Journal News	Tomorrow Today
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	Rocket Power	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants/ Right On Top	The Adventures of Jimmy Neutron/ My Life As A Teenage Robot	Nick Kicks/ All Grown Up		The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Unfabulous	Romeo	Naturally Sadie	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			One Heart				Tina, My Tina Buksan Ang Bintana				To Saudi With Love				Ang Misis Kong Hoodlum				Tatarin
Qtv	Gooduck	Shaman King	Outlaw Star	Galaxy Angel	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Phoenix	Irene	Fireworks	Damo	Project 11	Family Zoo		News On Q	Women's Desk		Irene
RPN 9	TV Shopping				Kapatid Show	RPN Akayon News		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The 4400		Medium		Invasion		Newswatch Now	Just For Laughs	Kasangga Mo Ang Langit	Police Hour
SBN 21								Sony Music Video				Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		Friends Again		Sony Music Video	
Solar Sports		2006 Jones Cup				Philippine Open '06 WS Finals		GWS 30-2006	NBA Access	FIBA RECAP 2005 Eurobasket Championship				World Pool 2006 Masters		Solar Sports Desk	NBA Access	Philippine Open '06 WS Finals	
Sports Plus				Raceworld		World Poker Tour Hollywood Home				Nopi Tunervision	Golf Today	World's Greatest Auto Show Tokyo		World Game		Auto Focus		Raceworld	
Star Movies		Hoodlum				Three Men And A Little Lady				Sideways				Out Of Time			[illegible] (10:45PM)		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Monk		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Rockstar: Supernova		The Office (US Version)	Arrested Development	The Drew Carey Show	Less Than Perfect	Seinfeld	Rockstar: Supernova
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Spirits	Blog	Wazzup Wazzup	Two And A Half Men		Joey (8:20PM)	Grey's Anatomy (9:10PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

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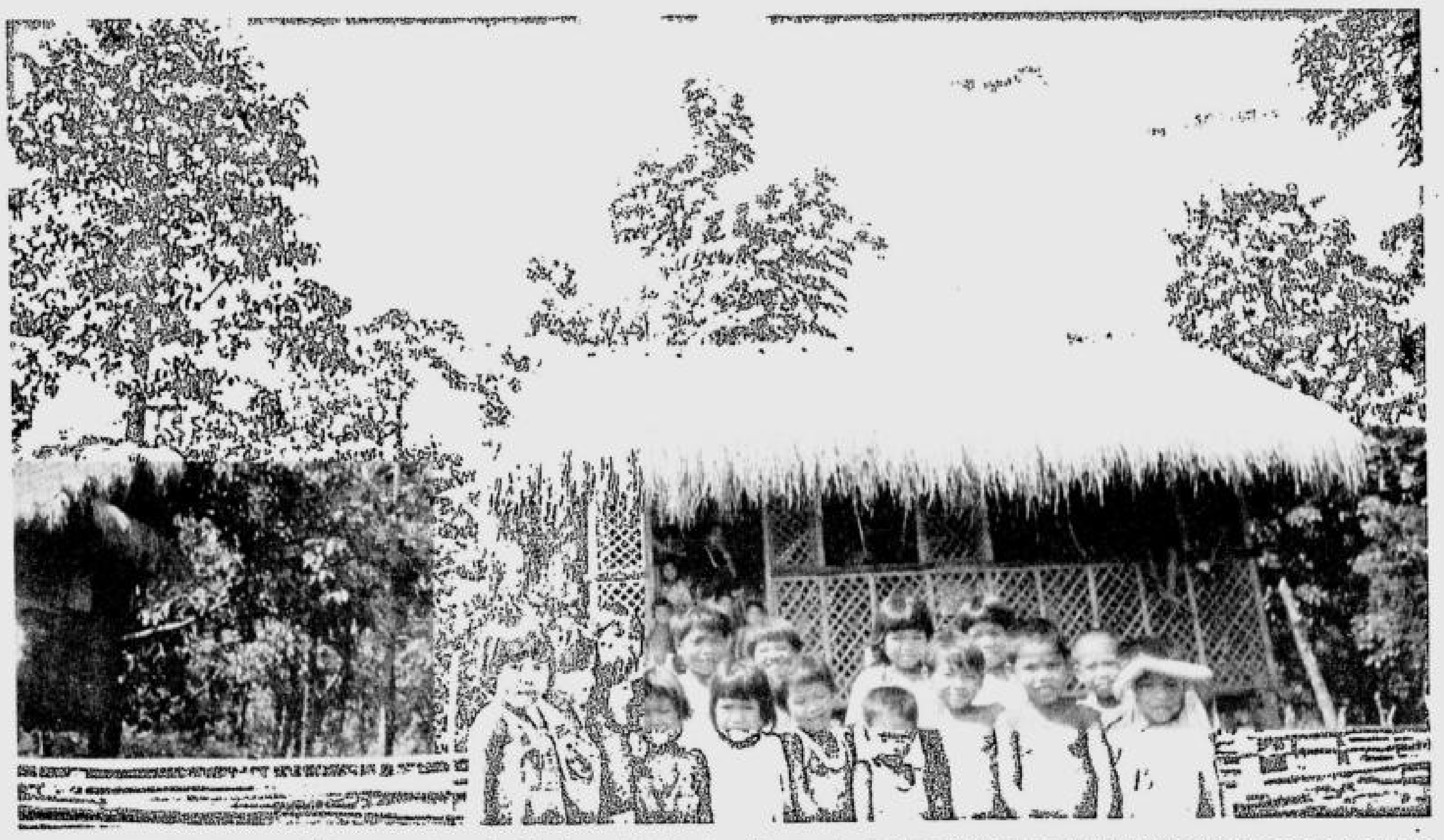
INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Floreño G. Solmirano

Mangyan school links kids to nature

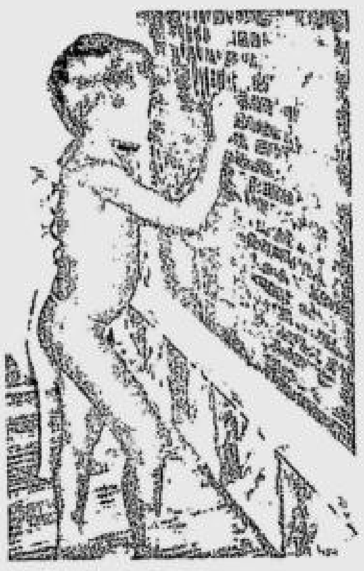
By Madonna T. Virola
San Jose, Occidental Mindoro



CLASS PICTURE: Mangyan children stand proud of their newly built school in an upland village in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro. CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

AFTER A SECONDARY SCHOOL for all Mangyan tribes was built in Sitio Danlog, Barangay Monteclaro, San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, in 1999, a Mangyan federation decided it was time to pursue its members' dream of a community and culture-based elementary school.

A YOUNG pupil learns to write with chalk on blackboard, as well as on the ground with a finger or stick.



"All these years, children had been used to growing up without any education at all. The big rivers isolate the interior communities from schools, which are all situated in the villages near the road," said Sr. Aristea "Thea" Bautista of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM).

Bautista serves as the director of the newly built Pamanaka Elementary School in Sitio Balingaso, also in Monteclaro. Pamanaka stands for Paaralang Mangyan na Angkop sa Kulturang Aalagaan.

To reach the upland village of Balingaso, one must travel for one hour from the San Jose town proper and walk for about two more hours.

Construction of the elementary school was completed a year ago, through the efforts of the Pantribung Samahan ng Kanlurang Mindoro (Pasakami), in collaboration with the FMM and the Mangyan Mission-Occidental Mindoro.

The three entities held consultations with the Pasakami Habanan Buhid, an organization of the Buhid tribe where the school is situated, and the Balingaso community from April to June last year.

On June 15 last year, a groundbreaking ceremony was held at the school site. Two parcels of land were donated by the families of Tukok Ginam and Oyan Medalla, both Mangyan, for the project.

Two skilled workers, together with Mangyan volunteers, built the school starting in mid-July last year.

Balingaso and the adjacent Buhid communities of Tikti-an, Ibaneg, Dagat-dagatan, Bato-ile and Danlog assigned five men each to work on the project, and the labor force was rotated per week.

Women and children of Balingaso also helped gather cogon grass and haul sand from the river to the school site.

After a month, the school building and the staff house were finished.

On Aug. 4 last year, enrollment was held in time for the opening of classes in September.

Thirty children were accommodated in the two classes.

Eleven children registered for one class of pupils aged 6-9 years old, while 19 enlisted in the class of those aged 10-16.

Classes are held only in the morning. The rest of the school day is used by the staff to make lesson plans, develop course modules, community integration, and research on culture.

Two teachers were given basic orientation on the alternative indigenous people's education program, including its vision, mission, goals, guiding principles, theoretical framework, programs and structures.

They were taught to understand the psycho-emotional barriers to cultural rootedness, integrative skills in facilitating classroom sessions, and curriculum development based on indigenous knowledge, skills and practices.

'Inculturated'

Alma Ramos, a Buhid Mangyan from Bato-ile, worked on developing literacy-numeracy modules for the 10-16 age group, while Luisito Malanao, a Ratagnon Mangyan from Sitio Banban, tackled developing literacy-numeracy modules for the 6-9 age group.

Under the tutorship of a part-time supervisor or mentor, the two teachers developed the "inculturated" literacy-numeracy modules for the first six months of school year 2005-06. The modules are written in Tagalog so that it can be used by other tribes who might want to start a similar program in their communities.

Ramos and Malanao have also translated the module in Buhid language, and have continuously improved the materials as they gain insights from their actual experiences.

The first six months of the school year are devoted to inculturated literacy and numeracy. The next six months covers the IP thematic curriculum.

The subject areas include swidden agriculture, gathering and processing of wild yam, and other sources of livelihood, depending on what is in season in the Mangyan production cycle.

Learning competencies in mathematics, English, science, Filipino and Hekasi are integrated when the classes take up the themes or subject areas.

The classroom is a cottage made from cogon and bamboo. But the entire community area is a natural learning space.

Children study on treetops, on the river bed or on top of rocks.

They write on the ground with fingers or sticks.

"The Mangyan are friends of the earth so part of the curriculum is keeping that relationship grow with the Mangyan children, like tending the soil and making plants grow, which teaches the children the care for and value nature," said Sister Thea.

"It is self-affirming, though, for the students to also experience their ability to write on the chalkboard."

Mayon survivor recalls 'roar of airplane' in '93

By Ephraim Aguilar
Legazpi City

"FROM MY HUT WHERE I WAS RESTING AFTER taking my lunch, I heard what seemed like the engine of an airplane roaring overhead," recalled farmer Gregorio Abellano, who suffered major burns in the body when Mayon volcano erupted on Feb. 2, 1993.

A FARMER from Barangay Mabinit in Legazpi City lights a cigarette from a lava fragment released by Mount Mayon.
NINO JESUS Y. ORBETA

There were no other signs of an imminent eruption. Mayon spewed small red hot rocks over his farm in Sitio Balagbag na Bulod, which is not far from the crater.

Now 69, Abellano, of Barangay Matanag in Legazpi City, still has vivid memories of that day, at about 1:30 p.m., 13 years ago when he ran away from the "rain of fire" he called "*tuga*" and "swirling hot clouds" he called "*oson*" that swiftly descended on Mayon's slopes.

Barefoot and clad only in shorts and t-shirt, he was badly burned on the face, back, arms and legs, before he found shelter in a shallow ground dug for his copra produce, some 50 meters away.

He hid inside the hole for about half an hour when he found it already safe to walk away, the pain from the searing heat licking his skin. He stopped to rest three times along the way before reaching the concrete road, a short walk away from his house.

The farmer, just under five feet tall, was veiled with grey soot all over the body from the ash fall and reeked of sulfur emitted by the volcano, when his young son saw him on the roadside.

Abellano spent three months in the hospital to recover from the burns before returning to the fertile land at Mayon's foot.

Every Feb. 2, Abellano attends Mass at the foot of a memorial cross mounted in Matanag. The names of the 79 farmers who died in the 1993 eruption were inscribed in the cross.

A priest blesses the candles lighted by the surviving relatives. Among the victims were Ponso and his son, whose pleas for help went unheeded, remembered the old man, who was himself fleeing from the "*oson*."

Many of of the names—Agao, Neptuno and Nuñez—from nearby Barangay Bagong Abre belonged to residents of Purok 5. One of them was a woman called Salome, who "was pregnant and watching over the field as her husband went to the city to buy fertilizer when Mayon erupted," recounted Abellano.

Another cross with no names but nearer the crater was installed by officials and relatives, he said.

These days, along with his carabao, Abellano spends much of his time tending to the banana plants, cassava crops and rice field near his home in Matanag, 9 km from Balagbag. He used to share farm work with his wife, who passed away last year.

Once a week, he still treks to his farmland in Balagbag, its grasses perennially moist, to look after some 15 coconut trees and occasionally to harvest snap beans and "*paggulong*" or "*sigarillas*" (winged bean).

"I have to go there because it is my source of livelihood," said Abellano.

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University head's child kidnapped

ZAMBOANGA CITY—UNIDENTIFIED GUNMEN abducted the deaf-mute heiress of a prominent family here on Tuesday evening, the victim's father and authorities said yesterday.

Eldigario Gonzales, president of the state-run Western Mindanao State University (WMSU), said his daughter Grace was strolling inside Aurora Village in Barangay Guiwan when snatched at gunpoint around 9 p.m.

Gonzales said Grace, 19, was with a friend when she was abducted.

The perpetrators, numbering about four, sped on two motorcycles, Gonzales said quoting his daughter's friend.

"What complicates the situation is that the abducted victim is deaf and mute," Senior Supt. Francisco Cristobal, city police chief, told the INQUIRER.

Cristobal said the police were following some leads including threats recently received by the elder Gonzales.

He said the kidnapping could be related to the WMSU president's work but he did not elaborate.

"We are pursuing all angles," he said.

Cristobal, who declined to speculate on the identities of the perpetrators, said the kidnappers have not contacted the family yet.

In the past, kidnappings in the city were staged by the Abu Sayyaf.

In Jolo, Sulu, the Abu Sayyaf has reportedly reduced its ransom demand for the release of Jackylyn Sildin, 58, and her son Jeffrey, 29.

The Sildins, who own a bakery and a pawnshop in Jolo, were abducted in Barangay Gandasuli around 6 a.m. on July 27 while on their way to downtown Jolo.

"Several armed men on board a red van snatched them that morning," Senior Supt. Ahirum Ajirim, Sulu police chief, earlier said.

Ajirim said the bandit group was demanding P10 million from the Sildin family.

But yesterday, Ajirim said the Abu Sayyaf has reduced the ransom demand by P4 million.

He said the police learned about the reduced demand from the victims' family.

Ajirim said the Sildins have also asked the police to allow negotiations with the kidnappers to take place.

Lt. Col. Rudy DeBellen, commander of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 4 (MBLT4), said a Jolo councilor was acting as negotiator for the Sildins.

"We believe that the victims are just within Jolo and we are trying to determine their whereabouts," DeBellen said.

The kidnapping of the Sildins was the second incident in Jolo involving the Abu Sayyaf this year.

On April 12, Abu Sayyaf gunmen kidnapped businesswoman Caridad Vergara and her son Beltran.

They were released on separate occasions after their relatives paid the bandit group a total of P1.2 million according to reports reaching the police and the military.

Authorities earlier said the Abu Sayyaf, that has ties with the international terror network al-Qaida, is making its presence felt again in Sulu after a hiatus of several months.

The military continues to pursue members of the Abu Sayyaf but no arrests have been made of its top leaders. *Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

'Henry' death toll reaches 7 as floods won't subside

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—TWO towns in Tarlac and Pampanga were placed under a state of calamity and the emergency status was retained in other areas as rains brought by tropical storm "Henry" aggravated the floods in 413 villages in Central Luzon on Wednesday, reports from the office of the civil defense (OCD) said.

In Cagayan Valley, seven people were reported killed at the height of the storm, according to the regional disaster coordinating council (RDCC) in Tuguegarao City.

Belated reports reaching the OCD said a two-year-old boy, Emer Celso, drowned last Friday after he was swept by strong currents from the Pampanga River in Barangay Bambang in Candaba.

8-ft floods

Local officials declared the calamity state in Ramos, Tarlac, and Candaba, Pampanga, as floodwaters spilled to river bank communities.

Water rose to four feet deep in Ramos' eight villages and to eight feet in Candaba, reports said.

The calamity state remained in effect in Pampanga and in Dinalupihan, Bataan, according to the OCD.

Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid anticipated serious flooding in the province's coastal villages as floodwaters from Nueva Ecija and Tarlac were to flow to the Pampanga River, the region's main drainer to the Manila Bay, in the coming days.

Still submerged were 56 villages in Ramos, La Paz, Moncada, Gerona, Camiling and Paniqui towns in Tarlac; 175 villages in Guimba, Cuyapo, Talugtog, San Antonio, Licab and General Natividad towns and Cabanatuan City in Nueva Ecija; 179 villages in Magalang, Floridablanca, Guagua, Lubao, Sasmuan, Arayat, Bacolor, Mexico, Sta. Ana, Candaba, Macabebe, Masantol, Minalin and Sto. Tomas towns in Pampanga; and three villages in San Narciso and Cabangan towns in Zambales.

400,000 live in floods

Houses of 96,439 families, or 475,931 people, remained flooded.

At least 1,008 people in nine villages in Ramos, Moncada and Gerona towns have evacuated to schools, chapels and barangay halls since Tuesday.

The storm largely spared Aurora province, leaving only minor landslides along highways, according to Danilo Nieva, operations chief of the provincial disaster coordinating council.

In Cagayan Valley, Chief Supt. Jefferson Soriano, regional police director and RDCC chair, said floods swept the house of a family in Maddela, Quirino.

The body of Napoleon Ciscar, a drowning victim, was found along the Pinacanauan river bank while the bodies of his wife Rosie and daughter Rhea were missing, Soriano said.

Other fatalities were Loreto Ramos Jr., who drowned; Francisco Lumanog, who was pinned inside his tricycle when a tamarind tree fell; and Nelson Agriam and Ernesto Guting Jr., both farmers, who were struck by lightning.

Authorities expressed concern over the storm's effects on agriculture in the region, projecting hundreds of millions of pesos worth of damages on various crops in Central Luzon.

The Nueva Ecija government earlier suspended work and classes at the height of flooding in the province. *Tonette Orejas and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk, and Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Fear grips families who fled NPA, Army clash

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—AT least 30 of the 76 families displaced by the July 31 clash between government soldiers and communist rebels at the foothills of Masinloc, Zambales, have not returned home out of fear, and feeding them has been a problem, a village official there said on Wednesday.

Barangay Captain Danilo Eamilao said the village's P56,000 calamity fund and his P8,000 allowance have all been used up to support the food and medical needs of more than 300 residents who fled Sitio Bunga in Barangay Sta. Rita.

"They have stayed in my house and yard. They refused to go elsewhere. I don't know where to get the money for their next meals," Eamilao said by phone.

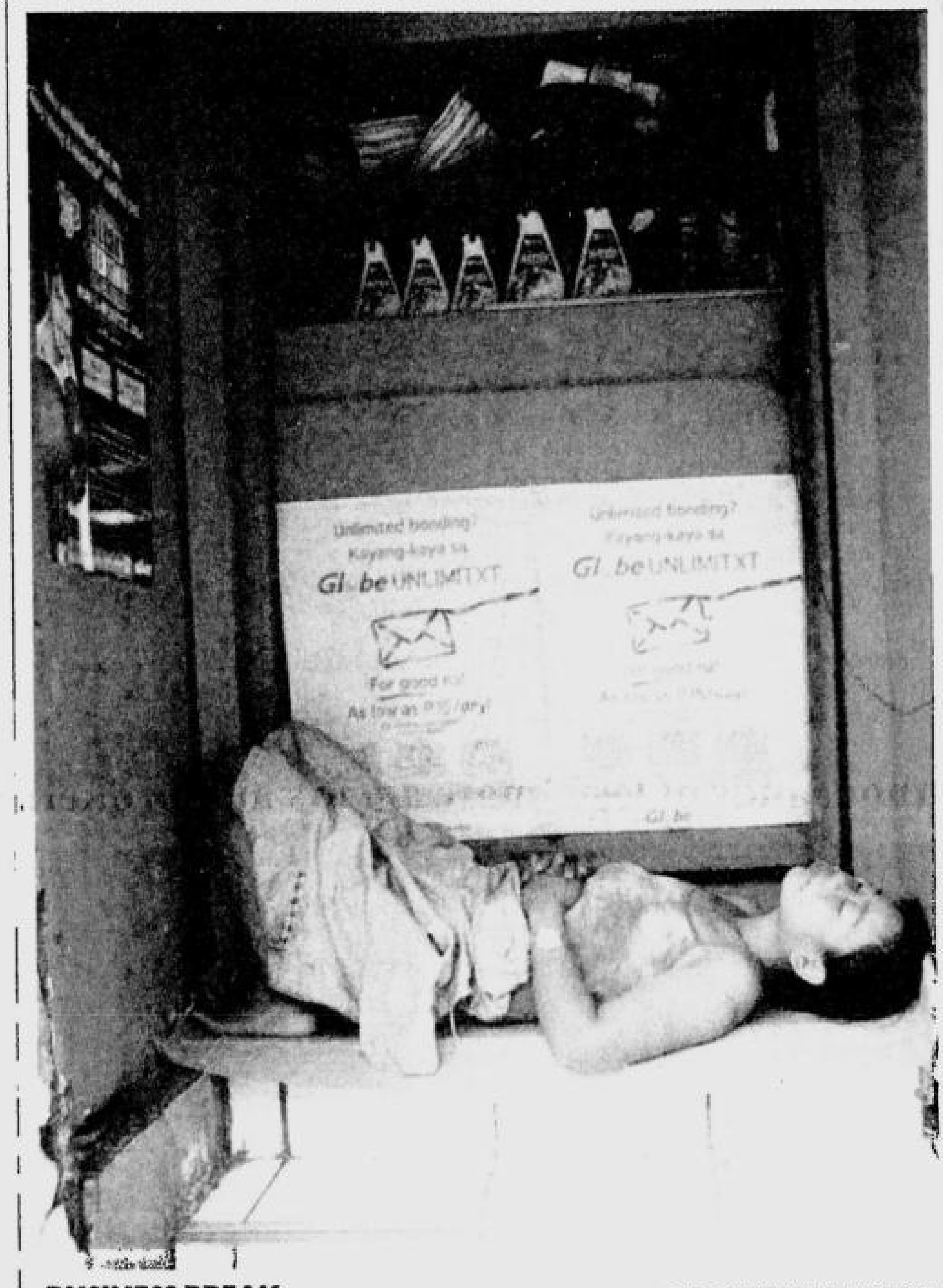
The makeshift evacuation center is at Purok 6, just 2 km from Sitio Bunga. Eamilao, chair of the league of village officials in Masinloc, said he would attend the council's session to ask for assistance.

Most of those who have stayed behind are children and their mothers.

"Some are still trembling in fear. Others are nervous," he said when asked how the evacuees were.

Quoting displaced families, Eamilao said soldiers had advised the residents to move out as they pursued around 50 New People's Army rebels.

Lt. Col. Felipe Anotado, commander of the Army's 24th Infantry Battalion, said the Monday clash lasted 30 minutes. *Tonette Orejas, PDI C.L.Desk*



ARNOLD ALMACEN/PDI VISAYAS BUREAU

BUSINESS BREAK
A worker takes a break from work to catch sleep at a stall in Iloilo City.

Troops hunting terror suspects kill 3 Sayyaf men

ZAMBOANGA CITY—GOVERNMENT SOLdiers in pursuit of two Indonesian suspects in the Bali bombing clashed with Abu Sayyaf gunmen and killed three of them on Tuesday, military and civilian officials said yesterday.

Col. Antonio Supnet, chief of staff of the military's Southern Command, said at least three Abu Sayyaf gunmen were killed while two others were wounded in the clashes in the outskirts of Indanan town.

The hostilities were triggered by the military's most ambitious plan yet—Oplan Ultimatum—against suspected terrorists hiding in Sulu.

Edmund Gumbahali, chief of the Philippine Information Agency (PIA) in Sulu, said a former Marine, who was acting as a guide to government security forces, was killed in Tuesday's clashes in the villages of Purot and Karay.

Gumbahali said members of the civilian-led Action Coordination Committee (ACC) convened to discuss if there's a need to evacuate residents in the areas.

"There maybe some evacuees but the ACC could not get the actual figures as of yet because the roads going to the encounter site are manned by soldiers and no commercial vehicles are available," Gumbahali said.

Southern Command chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon said the operation was not only directed against the two members of the Jemaah Islamiyah but also against Abu Sayyaf leaders Khadaffy Janjalani and Isnilon Hapilon.

"This will not be a quick battle, but it will be one where we will be decisive and victorious," he said.

As of yesterday, helicopter gunships and military artillery units were bombarding the area, according to officials.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Aleo, chief of the military-led Joint Task Force Comet, said the Army deployed blocking forces while other soldiers were told to stand by and act as reinforcements.
Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Invention in Baguio connects with OFWs in Lebanon

BAGUIO CITY—ONLY THREE calls to Lebanon were made on Monday from a telephone service offered by a Baguio businesswoman, but the communication system she herself designed gladdened more hearts than she anticipated.

Gladys Vergara, a software development enthusiast, opened a free international call center at a corner of her gasoline station near City Hall, after realizing that the conflict between Israel and Lebanon had adverse effects on the local economy.

It's "basic Economics 101," she said.

A good number of residents in Baguio and Benguet rely on foreign remittances, which have helped keep consumption alive in the summer capital, Vergara said.

Domestic tourists

Most domestic tourists, she added, are either financed by their relatives abroad or by overseas Filipino workers on vacation here.

To offer free international calls, Vergara used a customized adaptor, built to her specifications, which allows free access to existing telephone networks or which enables her to digitally translate voice messages made through these telephone calls so she can send them through the Internet.

Vergara said her adaptor is being sold to select distributors in the United States but has not yet been sold in the country for fear that giant telecommunications firms will block her efforts.

"I don't even have a name for it yet, but I have sold it simply as a Philippine-made adaptor for Voice-Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) for under $200 (P10,296)," Vergara told the INQUIRER.

The VOIP allows people to send voice messages using a broadband Internet connection.

Vergara said her adaptor's ability to connect to existing telephone networks or offer wireless Internet service has compelled a telecommunications firm to offer a P5 million buy-out deal, which she has rejected.

But she said these details have no direct consequence to Baguio residents who found a fresh way to contact relatives still trapped in Lebanon.

A woman from Barangay Aurora Hill was brought to the station by a barangay captain on Monday, after being told about the service. She said she needed to call a cousin, who is stuck in Beirut amid constant shelling from Israel.

On Tuesday, an overseas worker recently repatriated from Lebanon due to the war managed to contact her daughter, also an OFW there, who decided to stay to take care of her wards.

Could not be reached

Two women, both thirsting for news about their daughters, also took a chance.

Maura Saguid could not reach the cellular phone of her Eileen, but her neighbor, Estrella Martinez was successful.

"My daughter Remmalin is okay. She is a domestic helper like Eileen, but my daughter is based in Beirut and her employer assured me they are far from the bombings," Martinez said.

"Before that call, I was crying. I do not know where Beirut and Southern Lebanon were, and I was always sick in my stomach whenever I saw [footage] of the missiles hitting Lebanon," she said.

Foreigners have also taken advantage of the service. A British tourist saw the sign announcing free international calls and quickly dialed home.

"I actually opened it as a free incentive to my customers, who are mostly public utility drivers, but I realized that there was better need now when Beirut [was bombed]," Vergara said.

Ilocos Sur Vice Gov. Deogracias Victor Savellano discovered the service on Monday and ordered 50 adaptors to enable the provincial government to set up free long distance services there, she said.

Vergara said she is also donating a gadget to the city government.

PLDT eyes

But some officials of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. are keeping their eyes on this free service.

A PLDT source said the gadget may be tapping into their network, and this threatens their commercial franchise.

PLDT has started marketing its digital fiber optic project that broadens Internet access here.

"I have already received a call from PLDT alerting me to legal problems should I commercialize this gadget. I haven't. I am offering it for free," Vergara said. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

A WOMAN with a relative in Lebanon tries the free long distance call offered through the gadget developed by Gladys Vergara. Three calls to Lebanon were successful, but Vergara is uncertain how giant telecommunications firms would respond to the gadget.

August 3, 2006

HER EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

Dear Madame President,

We, the various insurance industry associations, want to once and for all stop the anomalies related to the motor vehicle insurance more commonly known as the Compulsory Third-Party Liability (CTPL) policy.

The industry has developed a solution by implementing a system that will ensure that all policies issued are valid. The current system, unfortunately, is not 100% effective because it is not connected to the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC)/Land Transportation Office (LTO) vehicle records.

As early as January this year, the industry with the approval of the Insurance Commission, developed a clearing-house process, similar to the check-clearing system used in the banking industry, to electronically verify CTPL policies at the LTO.

This clearing-house, called the Compulsory Insurance Processing Center (CIPC), will guarantee that only valid CTPL policies will be accepted and that proper taxes will be paid to the government. It will make certain that CTPL policies will not be overpriced and that all valid claims will be paid within the mandated five days.

CIPC will be an independently managed company, regulated by the Insurance Commission. It will be equally owned by all insurance companies and will ensure that all licensed firms will be allowed to participate in the business. It will also ensure the continuity of the livelihood of thousands of legitimate agents and brokers who will provide the services necessary to the public nationwide.

But until now, we have not been able to connect the industry clearing-house to the DOTC/LTO system.

Recently, GSIS, a government institution, has publicly announced that it wants to engage in the insurance business for private vehicles. Its proposal states that it wants LTO to issue GSIS policies, thereby, creating a monopoly. This will displace agents, brokers, and insurance companies. Such a move, we believe, is not pro-poor, pro-business and not aligned with your administration's agenda.

We pray for our government to uphold the right of private companies to conduct business in an open and free market within a regulated environment.

To solve this problem, we ask for two things:

1) To allow the CIPC industry clearing house to be connected to the DOTC/LTO vehicle record system to complete the verification process
2) To resolve this impasse immediately so that we can serve the public better

The insurance industry remains committed to implementing reforms to create transparency in support of your program to eradicate corruption.

Respectfully yours,

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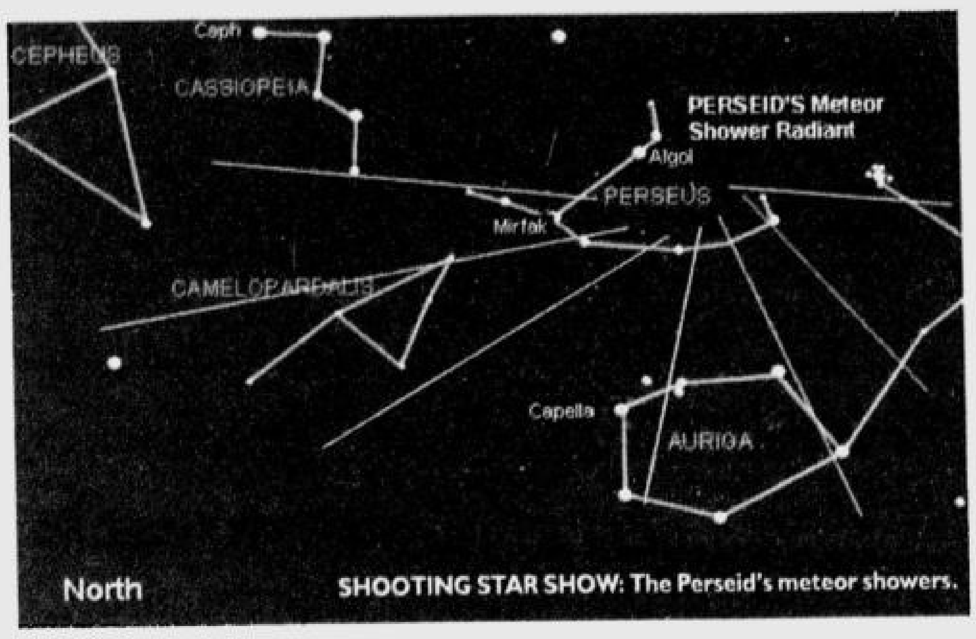

SHOOTING STAR SHOW: The Perseid's meteor showers.

On a clear August day, meteors will put up a show

By Blanche S. Rivera

IF THE SKY CAN BE CLEAR FOR A NIGHT IN August, wish that it falls on the eve of the 13th.

The famous Perseids meteor shower would make a show of "shooting stars" late at night on Aug. 12 until dawn the following day if the sky condition permits, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

"August is one of the most popular times of the year to observe meteor showers," Pagasa said in its August astronomical diary.

"Occasionally, an exceptional shower may show tens or even hundreds of meteors per minute, but (seeing) around 50 meteors per hour is more typical," the weather bureau said.

Pagasa astronomy chief Cynthia P. Celebre said that of around ten meteor showers every year, the Perseid meteor shower, which is seen from Aug. 10 to 14, was the most reliable.

The Perseids meteor shower radiates out from the constellation Perseus, which is located in the eastern horizon this time of the year. A radiant is a specific star which is the source of light of the meteors.

"The problem is that August is also a rainy month so people do not notice the shower. If it rains, there's nothing to see," Celebre told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

Meteors are easiest to spot by the naked eye if there is no moonlight and light pollution. Meteors in a shower appear to come from one area of the sky, but they melt as soon as they enter the earth's atmosphere due to extreme heat, Celebre said.

Should the sky cooperate this month, meteors would not be the only visible heavenly bodies in the night. Mars, Venus, Saturn, Mercury and Jupiter would be more easily sighted.

At 7 p.m. on Aug. 29, Jupiter will be found 38 degrees above the south-western horizon and will lie among the faint stars of the constellation Libra, the Scales.

"The largest planet will be ... the brightest object in the evening sky throughout the month. It will appear 37 seconds of an arc," Pagasa said.

Drilon backs Palace bid for P48B more

THE NEW CHAIR OF THE SENATE FInance committee, Sen. Frankin Drilon, said he is willing to support Malacañang's request for a P46.4 billion supplemental budget following the failure to approve the P1.053 trillion proposed 2006 national budget.

Drilon said he received the official communication from Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. about the Malacañang-certified bill seeking a supplemental budget in lieu of the new appropriation.

"It only means that the position of Malacañang is no longer to push for 2006 (budget) and have a supplement to the 2005 reenacted budget. So we can consider the 2006 budget as effectively dead," Drilon said.

Congress failed to approve the country's first trillion-peso budget last June after the Senate cut the budget by P64 billion, claiming they were mostly pork barrel funds.

President Macapagal-Arroyo threatened to veto any budget approved by Congress that would contain the Senate cuts.

Drilon said he was open to approving the proposed supplemental budget because they would be spent for items that really need the money.

"Many of the items there are mandatories, meaning that we have to appropriate for them," Drilon said. He cited the internal revenue allotment (IRA) funds for local government units.

"In 2006, their share should be based on the 2003 collection of national taxes. The reenacted budget of 2005 is based on the taxes collected in 2002. There is a difference of about P14.8 billion in the share of the LGUs that must be appropriated," he said.

But Drilon said his committee could not act on the supplemental budget before the House approves it.

Appropriation measures must originate in the lower chamber.

"It's too early to say [when it can be approved]. The House has not even started its deliberations," he said.

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LAUNDRY DAY A child plays in front of a fence where clothes have been set out to dry in Barangay West Kamias, Quezon City. Yesterday was the first time in days that the sun came out after tropical depression "Henry" left the country. Housewives promptly did their laundry to take advantage of the break in the weather.

RAFFY LERMA

Tulfos blame FG for TV show's demise

Contract nonrenewal blocked because of exposé, brothers claim

See you in court, Mike tells brothers

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and DJ Yap

FIRST GENTLEMAN JOSE MIGUEL ARroyo yesterday vowed to take the Tulfo brothers to court over what he called "rehashed malicious lies and gossip."

"We can't help but wonder why they are so mad at us but they can expect to see us in court very, very soon," Arroyo said through his spokesperson, lawyer Jesus Santos.

Santos also denied the Tulfos' claim that the First Gentleman was behind the cancellation of their show, "Isumbong Mo (Tulfo Brothers) over government-owned TV station RPN-9.

This stand was supported by Edith del Rosario, RPN-9's assistant general manager for operations. She told the INQUIRER that the decision to cancel the show was in line with the station's new programming thrust, as she denied that there was pressure from Arroyo.

"This was entirely a network decision. I don't understand how Mike Arroyo ever came into the picture," Del Rosario said.

ARROYO: "Rehashed malicious lies."

ERNIE SARMIENTO

"Although we are a government sequestered station, we operate on our own. The government does not even give us enough funds," she added.

Del Rosario also denied that "Isumbong Mo" was being singled out from all other shows aired on the station. She cited the case of "Makeover," a network-produced health and beauty program which is also ending after only one season. Other shows are also under review. Del Rosario said the high ratings of "Isumbong Mo" (as compared to other local shows aired on the station) "can be confirmed," but she added that the network "does not really focus" on ratings.

By DJ Yap

HARD-HITTING JOURNALIST RAMON Tulfo and his brothers Raffy and Erwin yesterday cried foul over the cancellation of their TV show on RPN-9—a government-owned station—allegedly upon the orders of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo.

The Tulfo brothers said the station had informed them that their block-time contract for their Saturday public affairs program "Isumbong Mo (Tulfo Brothers)," would no longer be renewed once it lapses on Aug. 12.

"The official reason they gave us was that they were reprogramming. What we can't understand is why only our program was excluded from the lineup," said Tulfo, who also writes a column for the INQUIRER. He added that the show had been rating well and was also getting enough revenues from commercials. "In fact, Isumbong Mo has the highest rating among the local shows on RPN-9," Tulfo said.

According to him, a "big personality"—whom he later identified as Arroyo—was behind the nonrenewal of the contract, purportedly out of anger over his exposés on the alleged smuggling activities of Arroyo's rumored mistress, Victoria Toh. The INQUIRER columnist had written a series of reports quoting Bureau of Customs sources about Toh's alleged control over the agency.

RAMON, Raffy and Erwin Tulfo (from right): Pressure from First Gentleman led to cancellation of our program.

RAFFY LERMA

At a press conference yesterday, the Tulfos said Arroyo had "advised" RPN-9 not to air their show for a second season. Tulfo said Arroyo had asked RPN-9 executives to stop the airing of the first season, but the station could not do so because the contract had already been signed.

The program, an offshoot of Tulfo's "Isumbong Mo Kay Tulfo" TV show, began airing in May, and is covered by a three-month block-time contract worth P720,000.

"Just yesterday (Tuesday), I resigned from my radio program on dwIZ because the station was also starting to feel the pressure," he claimed.

Erwin and Raffy, meanwhile, urged Arroyo to patch things up with their brother, since many people were being affected, especially those who wanted to seek the brothers' help through their TV program.

Dozens of people who said they had been helped by the Tulfos turned up at the press conference to express support for the brothers. They carried placards condemning what they said was an attack on press freedom.

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Reward offered for info on journalists' slay

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A P100,000 REWARD AWAITS anyone who can give information leading to the arrest of the person(s) behind the slay of two journalists in Caloocan and Malabon cities.

Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Northern Police District director, said the reward was offered by a nongovernment organization (NGO) to help speed up the arrest of the killers of Tanod photographer Prudencio "Dick" Melendres and RPN-9 cameraman Ralph Nuñez.

He said officials of the NGO had asked that their identities be kept secret because some might impute an ulterior motive to their offer when all they wanted was to help.

Bataoil said a team from the Criminal and Investigation and Detection Group based in Camp Crame was assigned to help in the investigation of the killings.

This information was relayed to him by Philippine National Police chief, Director General Oscar Calderon, he added.

The NPD chief said that with the help of the team, they would hopefully be able to meet the deadline set by President Macapagal-Arroyo for policemen to solve cases of killings—where the victims were media men and leftist militants—within 10 weeks.

Melendres was killed by four men in Malabon last Monday. Nuñez, on the other hand, was also shot dead last week in Caloocan City.

Meanwhile, one of two persons taken in for questioning over Melendres' death has been released from police custody after he tested negative for gunpowder burns.

Antonio Lopez, a neighbor of Melendres, was taken into police custody an hour after the photographer was killed.

"He is not totally off the hook but he had to be released because there were no charges filed against him," said Insp. Jorge Tabayag, the chief of the police team investigating the case.

Lopez was one of two people mentioned by Melendres in a letter which he had told his wife to open in case he was killed.

Police are now looking into the identity of a certain "Chief Marco," the other person cited in Melendres' letter.

21 hurt in Antipolo road mishap

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

DRIVING ALONG THE STEEP slopes of Antipolo City? Be extra careful and make sure your brakes are working.

This is the advice police have for motorists after a passenger jeep turned upside down in Barangay Sta. Cruz yesterday morning, injuring at least 21 people, mostly students.

This was the second major road accident reported in Antipolo City just three days after an allegedly drunk driver lost control of his vehicle on Monday night, killing at least two persons.

"Drivers should check the brakes of their vehicles first," police chief Supt. Primitivo Tabujara told the INQUIRER.

"They should never drive when they are drunk. Public transport jeepneys should also avoid overloading their vehicles with passengers," Tabujara added.

He said that drivers should be extra cautious, especially since most roads in the metropolis have become slippery due to intermittent rains.

Police said the jeep was moving fast on Marcos Highway at about 7 a.m. yesterday when driver Eddie Boy Corong, 26, suddenly lost control of the vehicle.

The jeep, which was on its way to Cubao in Quezon City, first swerved to the right lane, and rammed into the garage of a house before turning upside down.

Most of the passengers sustained minor injuries, but at least 18 of them did not go to the police to file formal complaints, Tabujara said.

Three days ago, two persons were killed when an allegedly drunk driver lost control of his Isuzu Highlander in Barangay San Isidro. Eduardo Masalinas rammed into four vehicles, killing motorcycle driver Ferdinand Pelaez and Alberto dela Cruz, 70, a retired soldier who was out taking a walk when the incident happened.

Mike Arroyo gets back at me for exposé

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo was seeking urgent congressional approval for a supplemental emergency budget of P500 million for the mass evacuation of Filipino workers from Lebanon.

Why would she ask for an emergency fund from Congress when the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) is supposed to take care of the financial needs of overseas contract workers in case of an emergency? Money for the repatriation of a distressed Filipino worker abroad is supposed to come from Owwa.

This only goes to show that the Owwa is bankrupt. Where did the P8 billion go?

* * *

The President's spin doctors say Owwa funds were never spent in the 2004 election.

But how do they explain the memo sent by Francisco T. Duque, then president and CEO of Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) to the President?

The memo suggested that Owwa medicare funds be transferred to Philhealth to be used in the 2004 election.

I'd like to quote a portion of that memo:

"The proposed transfer will have a significant bearing on the 2004 elections and on the President's desire to provide the health insurance of 8 million indigents by the end of 2003. I will be available to explain in greater detail the far-reaching political implications of the transfer. May I ask that we meet personally? My direct line is 09178132072 or 638-1684."

The memo was dated Nov. 20, 2002.

On Feb. 14, 2003, then Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo issued Executive Order 182 transferring Owwa medicare funds to Philhealth.

My Owwa source said that at the time of the transfer, Owwa medicare funds amounted to P3.4 billion.

The rest of the Owwa funds were transferred to the National Treasury where it could be withdrawn by the Department of Budget Management (DBM).

* * *

Starting Aug. 12, you will no longer be able to watch "Isumbong Mo! (Tulfo Brothers)" on RPN 9, the government-sequestered TV station. RPN 9 didn't renew the contract for the second season. A TV season lasts three months. RPN president Mia Concio gave no reason for the nonrenewal of our contract. She said the management was streamlining the programming of the station.

Of course that was a flimsy reason because "Isumbong" was up in the ratings game. According to the last survey, the program got eight percent of the viewership in Metro Manila and 11 percent for "Mega" Manila—meaning the Metro area and neighboring provinces—for that particular time slot (6 to 7 p.m. every Saturday). We were also paying in airtime to the station to the tune of P728,000 for the first season. In short, we were bringing in money to the cash-strapped RPN 9.

I know who's behind the nonrenewal of our contract: First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo. I incurred the ire of the First Gentleman when I exposed the smuggling activities of Vicky Toh, his alleged girlfriend, and her brother.

As a result of my exposé in this space last January, there was a Senate investigation.

Mr. Arroyo hasn't forgiven me for that.

DID YOU KNOW

ONGPIN, a commercial strip in Manila known for Chinese food, used to be called Calle Sacristia because the sacristy of Binondo Church opened on that street. It was renamed in 1915 after businessman-philanthropist Roman Ongpin. *Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research*

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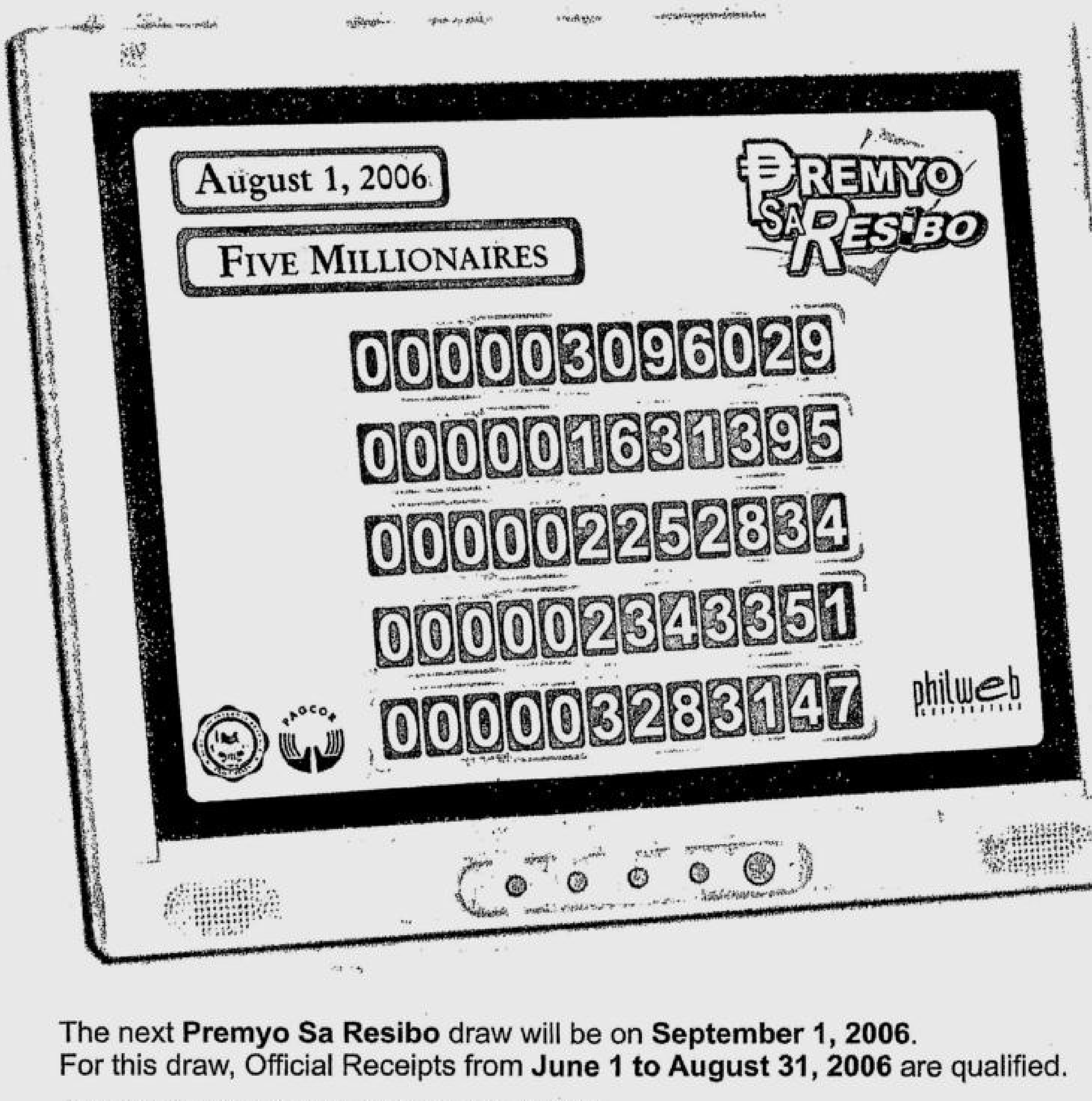

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Mel Gibson apologizes to Jews for racial slurs

LOS ANGELES—US ACTOR AND FILM DIRECTOR Mel Gibson apologized to the Jewish community Tuesday for anti-Semitic remarks he uttered while being arrested for drunken driving and asked to meet Jewish leaders to make amends.

In his first confirmation of using slurs against Jews originally reported on the Internet and picked up by media throughout the United States, Gibson said in a statement that he had no excuses for what he had done.

"There is no excuse, nor should there be any tolerance, for anyone who thinks or expresses any kind of anti-Semitic remark," said Gibson, who has checked himself into an alcohol rehabilitation program since the Friday dawn incident.

"I want to apologize to everyone in the Jewish community for the vitriolic and harmful words that I said to a law enforcement officer the night I was arrested on a DUI (driving under the influence) charge," he said.

Gibson, 50, who directed of the blockbuster "The Passion of the Christ," has already suffered a blow to his career since asking the arresting officer: "Are you a Jew" and then blaming Jews for being responsible for all of the world's wars.

ABC television network canceled a miniseries about the Holocaust it planned to produce with Gibson's Icon Productions, and the actor-director, who won two Oscars as director of the 1996 film "Braveheart," came under strong criticism from his peers and the media.

The US network did not refer to the incident in a statement released Tuesday, saying the decision was made because Gibson had failed to produce a script for the show in time.

"Given that it's been two years and we have yet to see the first draft of the script, we have decided to no longer pursue this project with Icon," ABC said.

A devout, conservative Catholic, Gibson said Tuesday that he was not a "bigot" and that his faith taught him to treat everyone with respect.

"Hatred of any kind goes against my faith," said the American-born, Australian-raised star of the "Lethal Weapon" movies.

"I am not just asking for forgiveness. I would like to take it one step further, and meet with the leaders in the Jewish community, with whom I can have a one-on-one discussion to discern the appropriate path for healing," he said. *AFP*

10,000 casualties feared in N. Korea

SEOUL—UP TO 10,000 NORTH KOREANS were believed dead or missing in what Pyongyang's official media is describing as the worst flooding in a century, a respected South Korean humanitarian group said Wednesday.

"About 4,000 people are now listed as missing, and we expect the final toll of dead and missing to reach 10,000," said the independent aid group Good Friends.

North Korea's official media has so far admitted that hundreds of people were dead or missing after the country was battered by heavy rainfall for nearly two weeks from July 10.

Seoul-based Good Friends said the media was now terming the flooding the worst to hit the impoverished country in a century and that a massive relief operation was now under way.

In a statement, the group said that despite the urgency of the disaster, North Korean soldiers were ordered to stay in their barracks and not to help with relief operations because of tension with the outside world over North Korea's recent missile tests.

North Korea's bare hillsides, which have been stripped of tree cover by impoverished residents looking for fuel, are particularly vulnerable to flooding and landslides caused by erosion.

Two weeks of heavy rainfall sent rainwater sweeping unimpeded down deforested hillsides, sending rivers of mud through farms and villages.

Worst-hit areas include Sinyang and other counties along the upstream of the Taedong river which runs through the center of Pyongyang, leaving thousands of people dead or missing, the aid group said.

In Haeju, 105 kilometers south of Pyongyang, 200 bodies were seen retrieved from the floodwaters, Good Friends said.

Malaria was now spreading in southern regions, the group added.

South Korea's former unification minister Jeong Se-Hyun, who is now leading the nongovernmental Korean Council for Reconciliation and Cooperation, said North Korea is clearly facing a national crisis.

Damage to the harvest across North Korea sparked concerns that its chronic food shortages may worsen again this year. *AFP*

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Developed by Honda Motor Co., Ltd., ASIMO stands at only 4 feet and weighing 95 pounds can fully function in a human environment and in turn, benefit society. His height was strategically designed, as his eye level is the same as a seated adult, to efficiently perform simple tasks at home or in the office. Some of his abilities include walking at various speeds, walking up and down stairs and slopes, balancing on uneven and tilted surfaces, operating light switches and doorknobs, and recognizing moving objects, obstacles, human gestures, sounds and faces.

Although as much work still remains as Honda progresses to expand ASIMO's abilities and capabilities, Honda's commitment continues as well, to create innovations in mobility that build a brighter future for mankind.

Now as we celebrate 50 years of friendship between Japan and the Philippines, ASIMO returns to the country as an ambassador of technology. A friend to the Filipino, ASIMO aims to inspire the young and the young at heart to contribute to the advancement of mobility, not just in the Philippines, but in the whole world.

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The year 2006 marks the 50th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Japan with the signing of the Peace Treaty and Reparations Agreement, which was signed on July 23, 1956. And what better emissary to the country is ASIMO. A symbol of technological advancement and assistance from Japan to the world. As Japan's ambassador of technology, ASIMO aims to foster goodwill and strengthen ties between the Philippines and Japan in the spirit of making technology work in harmony with society.

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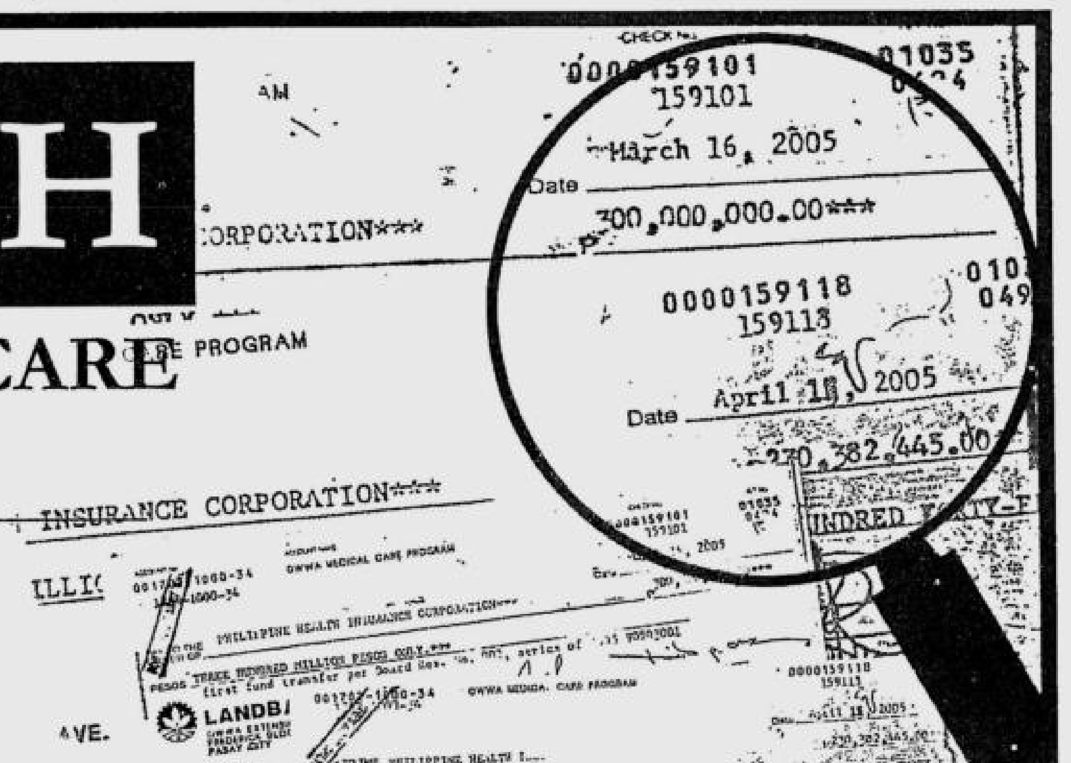

THE TRUTH
ABOUT THE OWWA-MEDICARE FUND TRANSFER

Allegation That the P530M OWWA-Medicare fund was transferred to PhilHealth in 2004, prior to the national elections

The truth The PhilHealth took over the reins of the Medicare program for OFWs from the OWWA only in March 2005 through the establishment of the Overseas Workers Program. Prior to the transfer, a Technical Working Group composed of representatives from both PhilHealth and the OWWA worked closely together and drew up the implementing guidelines to ensure the smooth transition and uninterrupted service to OFWs.

The TWG also agreed to transfer P530 million to finance the basic OFW program for a period of one year.

The first tranche worth P300M was transferred to PhilHealth last March 16, 2005, through LandBank of the Philippines - OWWA Extension Office Cheque Number 159101. The second and final tranche worth P230M was transferred last April 15, 2005 through Cheque Number 159118.

Allegation That there is no available fund for the Medicare needs of OFWs

The truth The fund for the health insurance needs of OFWs and their legal dependents is available. In fact, we have paid some P234 million for the PhilHealth claims of OFWs for the period March 2005 to February 2006, and another P261M for the 48,000 unprocessed claims that we inherited from the OWWA in 2005.

In a matter of nine (9) months since we took over the Medicare program for OFWs, benefits availment rose by 100 percent, from 1.1 percent to 2.25 percent, indicating that more OFWs and their families availed themselves of the medical care benefits under the National Health Insurance Program.

We assure the reading public that should any of the repatriated Filipinos from Lebanon get confined at any of our accredited hospitals nationwide, PhilHealth is ready, willing and financially able to significantly finance their hospitalization. This is our commitment to our hardworking OFWs who deserve nothing but the highest quality of genuine public service.

PhilHealth
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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Iran remains defiant in nuke standoff

TEHRAN—PRESIDENT MAHMOUD AHMADINEjad vowed Tuesday that Iran would not bow to "the language of force and threats," a day after the UN Security Council ordered it to freeze sensitive nuclear work by the end of the month.

"Iranians consider it their right to exploit peaceful nuclear fuel cycle technology and insist on their undeniable right," the hardline president said in a rally in the northeastern town of Bojnurd.

"If some people think they can talk to us with a language of force and threats, they are making a bad mistake. If they don't realize that now, one day they will learn it the hard way," he warned.

On Monday, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution that requires Iran to halt uranium enrichment and other sensitive nuclear fuel work by Aug. 31 or face the prospect of sanctions.

Iran insists it wants to enrich uranium only to make reactor fuel and that this is a right enshrined in the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Demands for a suspension stem from widespread suspicions the country wants the capacity to make weapons-grade uranium.

Ahmadinejad made no direct comment on the resolution but other senior officials dismissed it as "destructive" and "worthless." "This resolution will definitely have no constructive results and could only worsen the situation," foreign ministry spokesperson Hamid Reza Asefi said, quoted by the official IRNA news agency.

"It has only been designed to pressure Iran and to prematurely block the path of negotiations," he added.

Parliament Speaker Gholam-Ali Hadad-Adel was quoted by the ISNA news agency as saying: "While the Security Council does not dare to condemn the Qana massacre (in south Lebanon) ... it feels alarmed by Iran's nuclear activities and adopts a resolution that is worthless in the eyes of the people." Iran's ambassador to the United Nations described the resolution as "destructive and totally unwarranted." "I would suggest to you that this approach will not lead to any productive outcome. It can only exacerbate the situation," Javad Zarif told the Security Council in New York.

The Security Council charged International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief Mohammed ElBaradei with reporting back on Iranian compliance.

The resolution was pushed through after Iran ignored a previous non-binding deadline and failed to respond to the offer of a package of incentives in exchange for a moratorium on nuclear fuel work.

But the text held off from an immediate threat of sanctions, which have been opposed by Russia and China, and said any punitive action would have to be the subject of further discussions.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak said the resolution was "balanced and gives every opportunity for continuing the process of negotiations," although he did warn that "the Security Council could examine further steps to persuade Iran." "Of course, no one is going to look at any use of force," he was quoted as saying.

But a state radio commentator said the resolution was merely fresh proof that "Western countries want to prevent Iran from having an independent nuclear energy program." An editorial in the ultrahardline Siasat Rouz newspaper called on the government to quit the NPT—something officials have already threatened to do if the pressure mounts.

"In preparing the final battle, we should at first attack US bases in neighboring countries and then clear the region of this infected microbe," the paper said, while also calling on Iran to rally "friendly governments and Muslim people ready to carry out suicide attacks." *AFP*

More than 70 killed in attacks across Iraq

BAGHDAD—ROADSIDE BOMBS killed three laborers and a policeman in Iraq Wednesday, a day after bombings and shootings left more than 70 people dead in a dramatic surge of bloodshed in the country, police said. Tuesday's dead included 20 Iraqi troops, a US soldier and a British soldier.

Early Wednesday, a bomb in a garbage bag lying on a street in downtown Baghdad exploded near a group of laborers waiting to be hired for daily wage work, said police 1st Lt. Ahmed Mohammed Ali. He said three laborers were killed and eight were injured. Minutes later a second bomb, also hidden in a bag, exploded but caused no casualties, he said.

In the northern city of Mosul, a police patrol was hit by a roadside bomb Wednesday, killing one policeman and injuring four, said police 1st. Lt. Ahmed Khalil.

Also Wednesday, a man was killed when a bomb he was planting on a highway in northern Baghdad exploded, police Warrant Officer Mahoud Yassin said.

The recent surge of violence—blamed on sectarian rift between the Shiites and Sunnis and ordinary criminals—is being seen as a greater threat to the government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki than the anti-government, anti-US Sunni insurgency, which had erupted after the fall of Saddam Hussein in March 2003.

The US military is moving at least 3,700 soldiers from Mosul to Baghdad and is gearing up for a new security operation to wrest control of the capital from Shiite militias, Sunni insurgents, kidnap gangs, rogue police and freelance gunmen.

US officials have described the Baghdad campaign as a "must-win" for al-Maliki, whose government has struggled to curb the rise in violence since it took office May 20. American troops will work alongside US-trained Iraqi forces.

As part of the campaign against militias, US troops on Tuesday arrested a Baghdad-area representative of radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, whose Mahdi Army is among the most feared armed groups. *AP*

REUTERS

NEW YORKERS cool off in the ocean at Brooklyn's Coney Island in New York Aug. 1. Temperatures in New York soared to over 38 degrees Celsius during a heat wave marking a steamy beginning to the last month of summer.

Eastern US swelters through heat wave

NEW YORK—PARTS OF THE eastern United States began sweltering through a forecast three-day heat wave on Tuesday with the mercury topping 38 Celsius in some areas and New York City electricity demand setting a new record.

The heat wave moved across the country from California, which suffered more than two weeks of triple-digit temperatures that killed at least 136 people and caused power failures.

Temperatures hit or hovered near 100 degrees Fahrenheit in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, with hotter weather forecast for Wednesday. Detroit, St. Louis and Chicago were sweating it out in equally stifling temperatures.

"It is miserably hot outside and hard on everyone," New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg told reporters. "This is a very dangerous heatwave. It's really more than just uncomfortable, it can seriously threaten your lives." The National Weather Service issued excessive heat warnings and said the heat index—how hot it feels when the humidity is combined with the air temperature—was due to hit 46° C in New York on Wednesday.

"If people do not take precautions, we could be looking at a significant number of fatalities," said Gary Conte, the weather service's warning coordinator meteorologist. *Reuters*

Mahathir wants ban on US dollars

KUALA LUMPUR—FORMER Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has urged the international community to halt all transactions in US dollars and pound sterling to pressure Washington and London to end Israel's attacks on Lebanon.

Mahathir, a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause in his 22-year rule before retiring in 2003, said the Israeli offensive would not have been possible without "support and collusions" of United States and Britain.

"I appeal to the world to take this simple action. Reject the dollars and pounds. There will be economic turmoil for the whole world but this is a price we must be prepared to pay ... it will be temporary," he said in a statement late Tuesday.

"Until we do this, the Israeli-US-Britain axis will advance into Syria and Iran and other countries on the excuse they are all harboring terrorists."

His call comes ahead of an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference, or OIC, in Malaysia on Thursday.

At least 17 leaders of the group's 56 members are expected to attend, including representatives from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority.

The summit will call for "an unconditional cease-fire" and demand that a "UN peacekeeping force, which is to be deployed to Lebanon and Palestine, should be properly coordinated," Malaysia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

But Mahathir, who remains widely influential throughout the Muslim world, said verbal condemnations are "futile." *AP*

Castro says he is stable, but his health a state secret

CASTRO

HAVANA—CUBA MOVED TUESday to dispel speculation of Fidel Castro's impending demise, assuring the world that its leader was in "stable" condition after surgery and that his death was "far away."

But in a written statement read by a national television presenter, Castro, who has temporarily handed power to his brother for the first time, acknowledged he could not be upfront about his health in order to avoid "benefiting the enemy."

"Given Cuba's specific situation and designs against it by the US empire, my health becomes a state secret," he said.

The communist stalwart, who turns 80 on Aug. 13, said he was "in perfectly good spirits" but hinted he was not out of the woods yet.

"All I can say is that the situation will remain stable for several days before a verdict can be reached," said Castro.

He did not elaborate on the kind of "verdict" he was expecting of what other medical procedures could be in store for him.

Earlier, parliamentary speaker Ricardo Alarcon assured the public that Castro's "very end is far away."

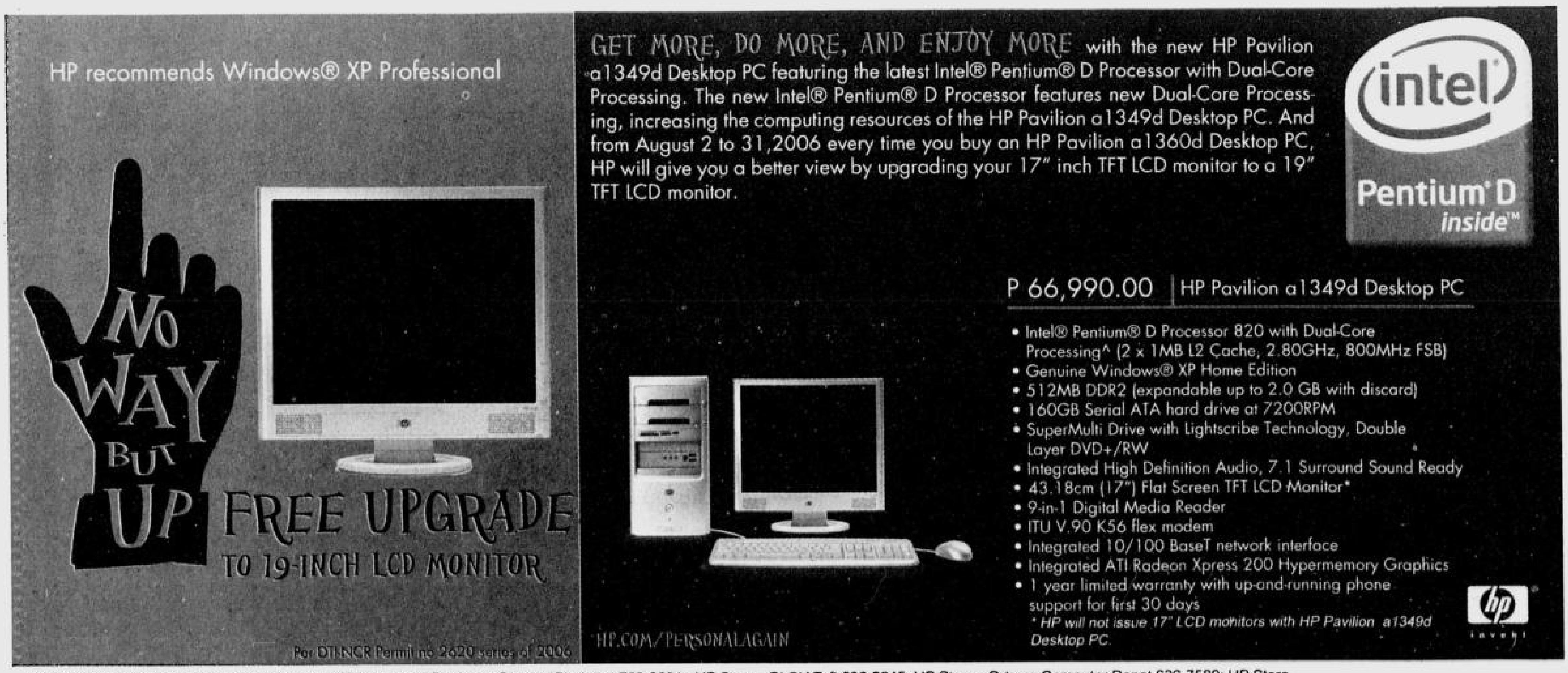
The statements broke silence one day after the shocking announcement that Castro was sidelined for the first time since he took power in 1959 as he relinquished power to his brother, Defense Minister Raul Castro.

Raul Castro had yet to make a public appearance since taking the reins, and Cubans had also not seen Fidel.

"I don't know if they are trying to prepare us for what's coming because of his advanced age," a Havana security guard, 52, said privately. "He is just not up to traveling around any more." "It is serious, really serious this time," said an elderly worker who requested anonymity like most Cubans asked to comment on Castro's health.

Cuban dissidents were not surprised by Raul Castro's designation as temporary leader, noting he had already been named his brother's heir.

"Any doubts over who was going to lead the succession are already cleared up ... it is evident that Raul Castro is going to lead this succession with a revolutionary dictate," said Manuel Cuesta Morua, spokesperson of the social-democrat movement Progressive Arc. *AFP*



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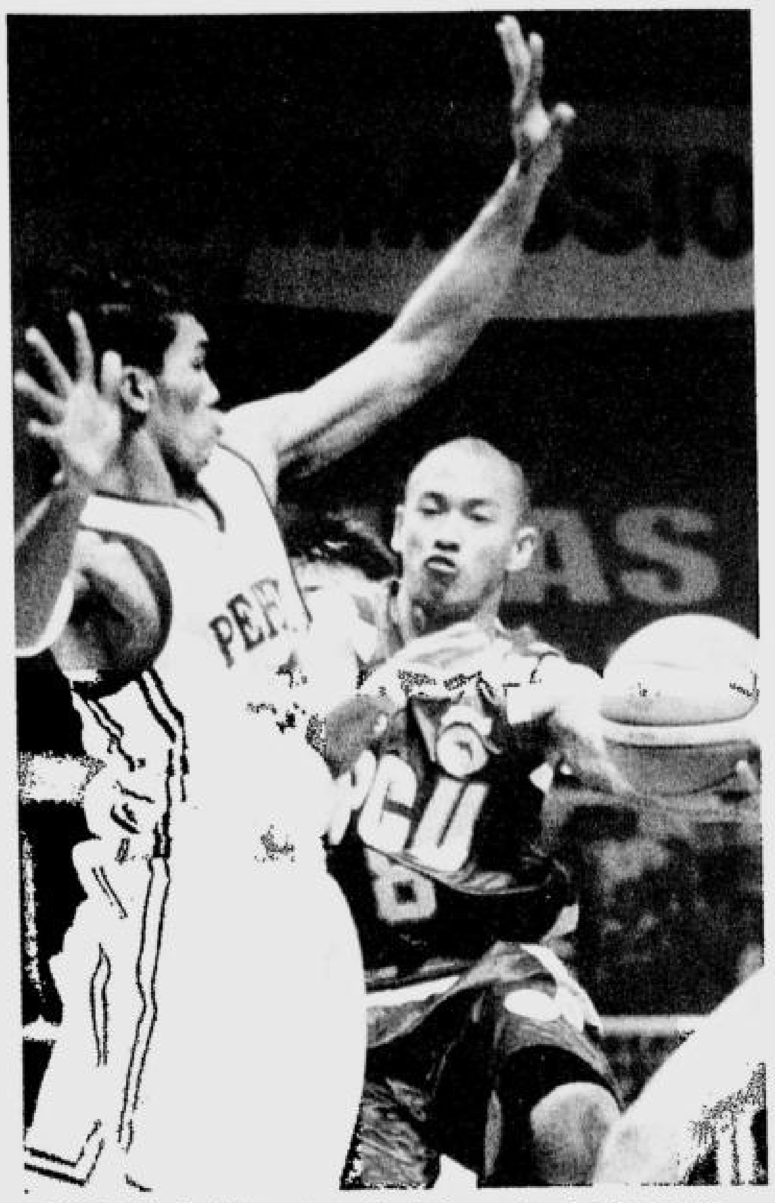
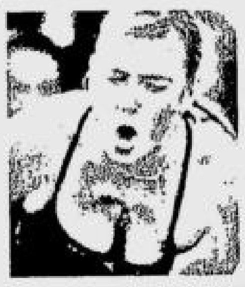

PCU'S Robby David penetrates the defense put up by Perpetual's Virgilio Manuel in their game yesterday. ERIK ARAZAS



WHAT'S INSIDE

- Sharapova, Hingis dump Acura rivals /A26

- Asi remains a Phone Pal for P8.4M /A24
- Landis awaits 'B' test result /A26

Knights thwart Blazers

By Marc Anthony Reyes

STILL REELING FROM ITS FIRST LOSS this season, Letran managed to summon enough strength to down stubborn St. Benilde, 71-63, last night and take a share of the lead in the NCAA men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

The Knights were visibly fatigued and dejected following their loss to San Beda last Friday and the Blazers raised the specter of an upset by tying the match at 63 with barely three minutes left.

But St. Benilde suddenly lost its touch and Fiel Daa and Aaron Aban came to the Knights' rescue by combining for eight straight points to seal their seventh victory in eight games that pushed Letran on top in the company of San Beda.

The Blazers, who led 56-52 after three quarters, suffered their seventh loss in eight outings.

Philippine Christian University posted their second straight victory with a 64-54 romp of Perpetual Help in the other seniors game.

The Dolphins solidified their hold of third spot with six triumphs against two defeats, while the Altas absorbed their third straight defeat in a 2-6 slate.

Aban finished with 19 points, including 10 in the fourth quarter, to lead the Knights. He also had eight rebounds, three assists and one steal to make up for his poor performance against San Beda where he only made eight markers.

"Maybe we are still tired after that game last Friday, we are still affected by that loss," said Letran coach Louie Alas. "But we expected all teams to play hard in the second round because they will be making adjustments."

Kris Robles hit a three-pointer with just 2:48 left to level the score at 63 for the Blazers, but Daa quickly broke the tie and Aban added three free throws to secure the win, 68-63.

Veteran guard Jason Castro shone for the 2004 champion Dolphins with a team-high 16 points on top of eight rebounds, four assists and one steal. Gabby Espinas backed him up with 12 points, 13 rebounds and three steals.

In juniors play, Ralph Lansang scattered 21 points to lead the Baby Dolphins to an 86-76 victory over the Altalettes. The Baby Dolphins improved to 5-2 while the Altalettes dropped to 1-6.

The scores:

Second Game (Srs)

PCU 64 - Castro 16, Espinas 12, Garrido 11, David 8, Belga 8, Amparado 6, Navarro 3, Salem 0, Vidal 0, Santos 0, McCoy 0, Hermosa 0.

PERPETUAL 54 - Bauzon 14, Misa 13, Joe 8, Kong 7, Mendoza 6, Perturbos 3, Galabin 3, Reyes 0, Racho 0, Manuel 0, Liaz 0, Lee 0.

Quarters: 16-17, 27-25, 45-31, 64-54.

Third Game (Srs)

LETRAN 71 - Aban 19, Bautista 12, Daa 12, Mondragon 6, Balneg 6, Faundo 4, Quinday 4, Guevarra 3, Melegrito 2, Dangcal 2, Realista 1, Ranises 0.

ST. BENILDE 63 - Libunao 11, David 7, Robles 7, Manding 6, Manlapaz 6, Urra Jr 6, Johnston 5, Layug 5, Umlas 4, Sevilla 2, Cadiz 2, Aldover 2, Trillo 0, Urra III 0, Devaras 0.

Quarters: 13-18, 36-32, 52-56, 71-63.

STANDINGS	W	L
San Beda	7	1
Letran	7	1
PCU	6	2
Mapua	5	3
SSC-R	3	5
Perpetual	2	6
St. Benilde	1	7
Jose Rizal U	1	7

GAMES TOMORROW
(N. Aquino Stadium)
12 nn — San Sebastian vs San Beda (jrs/srs)
4 p.m.— JRU vs Mapua (srs)

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Team Pilipinas takes on Qatar national five

DOHA, QATAR—FILIPINOS IN this oil-rich state, who have been aching to see their national basketball team in action, will have to wait one day more.

African champion Angola failed to make it in time for the opening of the Al-Emadi International basketball tournament Tuesday, forcing organizers to change the schedule of the week-long, four-nation cagefest.

SMC-Team Pilipinas, which was supposed to take on Angola on opening day, battles host Qatar first instead at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday (Thursday in Manila) at the Al-Gharafa Sports Club Hall here.

The Nationals then face the tall and hefty Latvian national team Thursday before winding up their elimination round schedule against Angola on Friday, which was originally set as a rest day.

"The new schedule is tougher for us," said SMC-Team Pilipinas head coach Chot Reyes, who celebrated his birthday Tuesday. "It means that we will have to play five straight games—from Wednesday to Sunday. The crucial point comes on Saturday when we play the semis. That will be our fourth game in as many days and we may play a team which is coming off a rest day."

But the development also has its upside.

"The good thing about it is we'll have an extra day to practice. This team barely had a week's practice together and the change allows us to have two days of practice here with a complete lineup," Reyes explained.

The new schedule also gives Rafi Reavis time to rest his travel-weary body. He made the nine-hour trip to this capital city of Qatar seven hours after flying into Manila from the United States.

The Filipinos are in high spirits, with playmaker Dennis Miranda spending quality time with his family on their first day of stay. His parents and sister have been residing in Qatar for the past decade and they lost no time visiting the Coca-Cola point guard at the Marriott Hotel where the team is billeted.

"Mabibigat ang kalaban dito pero siyempre gagawin naming lahat ng makakaya namin para sa mga kababayan natin dito (The field is tough but we will do our best for our countrymen here)," said veteran Willie Miller, referring to the roughly 80,000 Filipinos working in Qatar.

The Nationals paid a courtesy call on Vice Consul Jabbar Adiong at the Philippine Embassy before plunging into practice Tuesday.

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

MILLER: We'll do our best

So spearheads Tagaytay bets in rapid chess

FIDE MASTER WESLEY SO BANNERS A YOUNG but talented Tagaytay squad when the 2006 Rapid Open Chess Team Championship gets underway Aug. 5-6 at the 2nd floor, Starmall Shopping Complex in Mandaluyong City.

The 12-year-old So will match wits with Grandmaster Joey Antonio, GM Mark Paragua and GM Nelson Mariano, who will lead separate squads in the event organized by the Mandaluyong City Chess Association and sponsored by Mandaluyong City Rep. Benhur Abalos, deputy president for Asia Casto "Toti Abundo, the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office and Pagcor.

Antonio will man the top board for Laguna; Paragua will be Balanga's main man, while Mariano will lead Ed Madrid's team.

Other teams which have confirmed their participation in the event sanctioned by the National Chess Federation of the Philippines include host Mandaluyong City, Bgy. Alabang, Calamba City, SSS, Department of Agrarian Reform, Rizal Technological Institute, Dasmariñas, Pandacan, Manila, Novaliches, Caloocan City, Mauban, Quezon, J.D. Legaspi, Pampanga, Philippine National Police and Palawan.

Expected to grace the opening ceremony are NCFP president Rep. Prospero "Butch" Pichay, secretary general and Tagaytay City Mayor Abraham "Bambol" Tolentino and Rep. Abalos.

The tournament offers a total cash prize of P130,000, with the champion getting the lion's share of P50,000 and a trophy.

Call or text NCFP director and tournament chief Willie Abalos at 0921-621-9898 or Ilann Perez at 0915-519-8676. *Marlon Bernardino*

Valle halts PCA winning streak

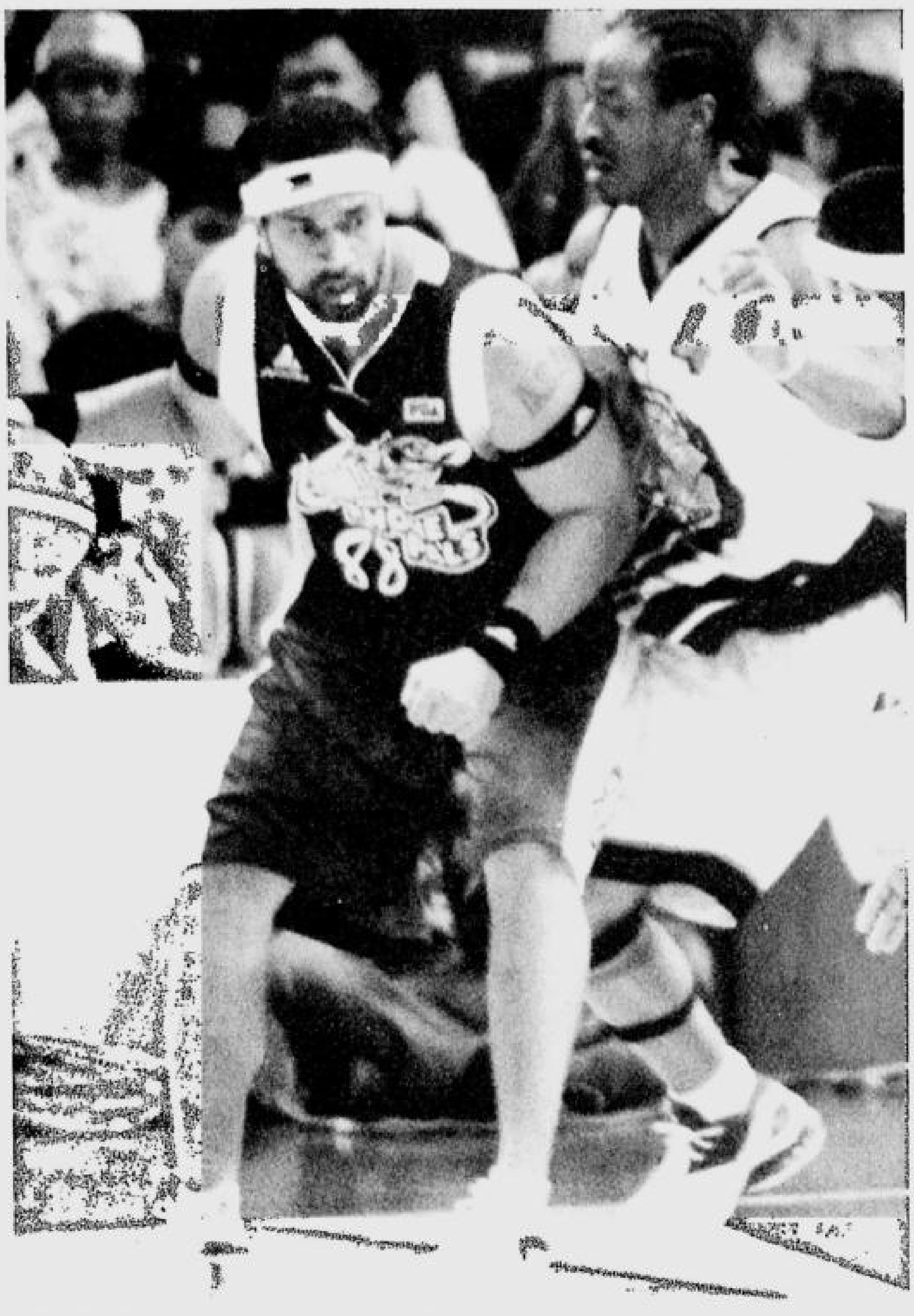
STANDINGS	W	L
LaCo	5	1
PCA	5	1
MTC	4	2
VVCC	3	3
MLTC	2	4
Capitol	2	4
Eusebio	0	6

VALLE VERDE SNAPPED PHILIPPINE COLUMBIAN Association's victory streak with a 4-3 decision last Saturday at the close of the elimination round of the second Prince Home & Away Invitational Team Tennis tournament at the Valle Verde Country Club in Pasig City.

Randy Villanueva and Karl Santamaria won the deciding match over Michael Misa and Raymond Villarete, 8-5, to give Valle Verde the No. 4 seeding in the quarterfinals.

Valle Verde took a 3-0 lead from the victories of Kiko Guttierez and Tony Sagansay, Sr. (55 & above), Eva Abella and Irene Chua (Ladies), and Derrick Santos and Junjun Villanueva (35 & above) but PCA tied the count at 3-3 courtesy of Charlie Niu and Mike Sy (35 & Above), Boy Santos and Albert Chiu (45 & Above) and Roland Kraut and Ivan Santos (Open).

Meanwhile, Mandaluyong Tennis Club (MTC) clinched the No. 3 seeding by besting Mandaluyong Lawn Tennis Club (MLTC), 4-3. Allan Badillo and Cris Mariano prevailed over Gary Murtz and Patrick Jeanjacque, 8-5, in the 35 & above deciding match. Capitol Tennis Club nipped Eusebio Tennis Club, 4-3, to take the sixth and final slot in this tournament supported by Yellow Cab Pizza.



LUCRATIVE days continue for Asi Taulava (left). RUDY ESPERAS

Asi remains a Phone Pal for P8.4M

By June Navarro

ASI TAULAVA, HONORED AS THE 2003 MOST VALUABLE PLAYER after spearheading Talk 'N Text to its first ever Philippine Basketball Association championship, has inked a fresh two-year deal with the Phone Pals worth P8.4 million.

The most dominant big man in the league the past five seasons will receive the maximum allowable monthly take of P350,000 outside of added perks and bonuses according to an INQUIRER source yesterday.

The Phone Pals have earlier retained the services of playmaker Donbel Belano as backup for Jimmy Alapag the next three seasons.

On his eighth season with the Phone Pals, the 6-foot-9 Taulava still has the spunk to help the Phone Pals duplicate the All-Filipino crown they captured in 2003, the first for the Manny V. Pangilinan-owned ballclub since joining the league in 1996.

The 33-year-old Taulava is the league's scoring leader since 2001, averaging 20.2 points per game before Barangay Ginebra's Mark Caguioa outshot him last season.

Nonetheless, Taulava is still the king of the boards after topping the rebounding department during the 2005 season for the fourth time in five years.

The hulking Fil-Tongan grabbed an average of 13 rebounds in 41 games last season, including a 5.3 rpg off the offensive boards.

Taulava's scoring, however, dipped last year to only 14.9 points in 41 outings.

Belano, 29, who usually comes off the bench and relieves Alapag, missed several games for the Phone Pals at the start of the Philippine Cup, giving coach Derrick Pumaren some headaches then at the backcourt.

Although they missed Willie Miller's backcourt genius after he was traded to Alaska, the Phone Pals, who are currently on a training stint in the US, have compensated by acquiring shooter Renren Ritualo and pivotman Don Allado.

The Phone Pals are also scheduled to play a series of tuneup games in China this September.

Southwoods routs Sta. Elena; Mimosa posts upset

STANDINGS (Win-Loss-Draw-Points)

Group 1: Orchard 1-1-0-2, Forest Hills 1-0-0-2, Wack Wack 1-0-0-2, Riviera 0-1-1-1, Eastridge 0-1-1-1

Group 2: Southwoods 2-0-0-5, Valley 1-1-0-2, Sherwood Hills 1-0-0-2, Sta. Elena 0-2-0-0, Camp John Hay 0-1-0-0

Group 3: Alabang 1-0-1-3, Highlands 0-0-2-2, CDC-Mimosa 1-1-0-2, Canlubang 0-1-0-1, Northwoods 0-1-0-0

MANILA SOUTHWOODS NOTCHED THE first blowout win of the young season, taking a bonus point after a 3.5-0.5 rout of Sta. Elena even as CDC-Mimosa stunned Royal Northwoods at the resumption of the 2006 Federation Golf League in various venues over the weekend.

Tony Fernando and Richie Santos trashed their foes in scramble to cap the rousing win that also saw Edmund Yee-Freddie Mendoza prevail in high-low, Ferdie Agustin and Florene delos Santos clinch the aggregate point and Mike Bibat-Jed Rosero split the greensomes duel.

It was the second straight win of Southwoods in Group 2 after a 3-1 domination of Valley last week. With five points, including the bonus marker against Sta. Elena, Southwoods zoomed three clear of Valley, which bounced back with a 2.5-1.5 win over visiting Camp John Hay.

CDC-Mimosa pulled off the weekend's big reversal when it downed 2004 champion Royal Northwoods, 2.5-1.5, at home.

After Rodel Mangulabnan and Junie Fontanilla ended the aggregate play on the 10th hole, the guns of Royal Northwoods fell silent and lost two of the three matches. Noel Punzalan and Edgar Tang won the greensomes 5&4, Gus Ayson and Jayson Tai prevailed in scramble 3&1 then Sam Bugayong and Tom Britt secured the clinching draw in high-low.

Defending champion Forest Hills launched its title-retention bid with a 2.5-1.5 trashing of Riviera. Raffy Garcia and Garry Uy (aggregate) and Jong Laput and Eding Hizon (high-low) won their matches while Migs Garcia-Bing Datu forged a draw in the greensomes to pull off the victory that pulled the Antipolo-based team into a share of the lead in Group 1 with Orchard.

Orchard, coming off a loss to Wack Wack, demolished Eastridge, 3-1.

King Stehmeier and Carlo Magno salvaged a draw for Alabang with Tagaytay Highlands by winning the scramble on the last hole. Tagaytay led Greg Yang-Pepe Lim but OV Espiritu-Caloy Coscolluela evened up matters for Alabang.

Carapiet rules 4th round, moves closer to Rotax title

IVAN CARAPIET MADE IT BACK-TO-BACK IN the 2006 Rotax Invitational Challenge when he topped the fourth round of the series held recently at the Carmona Circuit Philippines in Cavite.

Carapiet, a former Formula Toyota champion, took the lead at the start of the 20-lap race held on a wet track and never looked back. With the win, the 20-year-old Carapiet was rewarded P42,500, tightened his grip on the series lead and moved one race closer to taking the 2006 Rotax Invitational title.

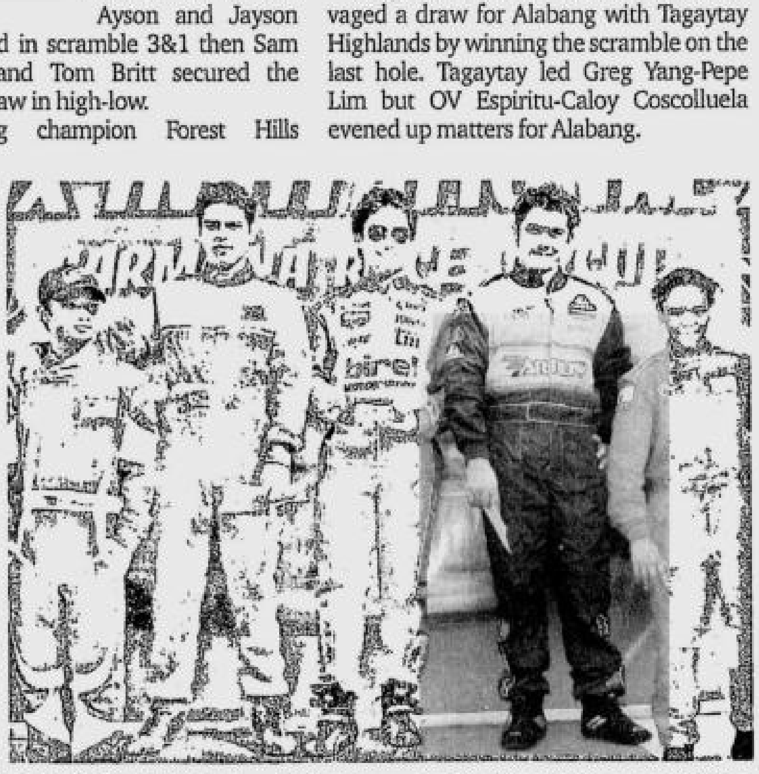
"To be honest, I began having problems four laps from the end," said Carapiet. "My engine sucked in some rain water and I was misfiring down the straights. Luckily, I had a big enough lead when it happened."

Daniel Cleak finished second for the third race in a row. Cleak took a spin on the third lap and was caught in a three-kart collision with Oliver Aquino and Paolo Eslao. Cleak recovered and won P22,500 for his effort.

Maico Angeles, who was among the top three from qualifying to the pre-final, came home third in the final to earn P15,000.

In fourth place was 14-year-old newcomer Bobby Domingo, who received P10,000 in the event sponsored by ING Banking, Pitts, Petron, Chicago City Day School, Ford Global City, Nissan Gallery and Klassik BMW.

Young sensation Alessandra Madrigal, 10, who reached third during the qualifying heats, settled for fifth place and P7,500.



ROTAX TOP FIVE: From left, Alessandra Madrigal, fifth place; Maico Angeles, third place; Ivan Carapiet, winner; Daniel Cleak, second place; and Bobby Domingo, fourth place.

ARE WE THERE YET? This seems to be the question 4-year-old Anne Fabian is asking her mother as they reach the homestretch of the 3K kiddies run of the 30th National Milo Marathon in Davao City last Sunday.

Naga hosts Milo Marathon elims Sunday

NAGA CITY GETS THE CHANCE TO HOST the 30th National Milo Marathon elimination races at the Quezon Plaza on Sunday.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's divisions of the 21K run will advance to the 42K national finals slated Dec. 10 in Metro Manila.

Last year's Naga City leg winners Neri Barcelo and Joanne Manangat are expected to qualify for the finals anew, but their respective titles will be challenged by former champions Alvin Canada and Luisa Raterta.

Canada topped the Naga City legs in 2002 and 2004 while Raterta, who placed second last year despite running with a slight fever, won in 2003 and 2004.

Raterta is the twin sister of 2003 National Milo Marathon champion Liza Yambao, who topped the Lucena City leg last March to qualify.

Other contenders in the men's race here are Ernie Payong and Henry Janer.

More than 7,000 runners are expected to join this annual foot race in Naga City held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Cebu Pacific, Department of Tourism and Powerbar.

While the best long distance runners from the Bicol Region are expected to join the 21K centerpiece event, most of the participants are entered in the 5K fun run and 3K Kiddies Age-Group event.

All top 10 finishers in the three racing events will receive trophies, medals and cash prizes amounting to P159,000.

Naga City Mayor Jesse M. Robredo will fire the starting gun at 6 a.m.

The 30th Milo Marathon boasts a record 30 legs for the 2006 season. Next week's races will be held the SBMA in Olongapo.

Milo Sports Events Executive Pat Goc-ong is advising participants to be at the starting area not later than 5 a.m. for pre-race briefings and check in.

National Milo Marathon organizer Rudy Biscocho meanwhile is advising all participants to wear their e Milo T-shirts given to them upon registration for security purposes.

WNCAA marks 37th season with 20 teams on Saturday

By Jasmine W. Payo

WITH THE ADDITION OF TWO NEW MEMbers, a keener competition is expected when the 37th Women's National Collegiate Athletic Association (WNCAA) basketball tournament kicks off Saturday at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Joining the oldest tri-level league for women in the country are Philippine Women's University and St. Francis of Assisi College.

"The addition of PWU and St. Francis would surely bring more excitement to the league as the old members would double their efforts so as not to be upstaged by the newcomers," said league chief operating officer Ma. Vivian Manila during a press conference yesterday at the Grand Boulevard Hotel.

The league, which now has 20 competing schools in the National Capital Region, divides competition in three levels—elementary, high school and college.

The seniors division of the basketball tournament is split into two groups.

Defending Group A champion AMA Computer University and reigning Group B titlist San Beda College Alabang will compete in the same bracket this season.

Joining them in Group A are St. Scholastica's College, Philippine Women's University, College of St. Benilde, Centro Escolar University and Lyceum of the Philippines.

Miriam College is expected to pace Group B, which is composed of University of Asia and the Pacific, Emilio Aguinaldo College, Siena College of Quezon City, La Consolacion College, Rizal Technological University, World Citi Colleges and St. Francis of Assisi College.

"WNCAA has already proven to be one of the best leagues in the country. We're already the third longest running collegiate league (next to NCAA and UAAP)," said league president Ma. Angelica dela Cruz.

Bemedalled swimmer Akiko Thompson will be the keynote speaker during the season opener this Saturday. This season's host is St. Stephen's High School.

The two new members get going right away with Miriam College taking on St. Francis in the 3:30 p.m. curtain-raiser with St. Scholastica's College meeting Philippine Women's University at 5.

Solar Sports' vice president for marketing Jude Turcuatco added that basketball and volleyball games and the cheer dancing competition will be aired on the cable channel.

ROMY HOMILLADA

AMAYA Paz: Still deadly with her arrows despite a broken elbow.

Persistent Paz hits target in Malaysia

By Marc Anthony Reyes

SHE MAY HAVE A BROKEN ELBOW, BUT her fighting spirit remained intact.

Amaya Paz, the country's archery sensation, proved that recently when she helped the Philippine team dominate the 2006 Asian Grand Prix in Kuala Lumpur.

The 20-year-old psychology senior at the University of the Philippines did the country proud again by clinching three of the six golds at stake in the ladies division, scoring in the individual Olympic round, individual 30-meter before helping the RP team snare the team Olympic round.

Teammate Earl Yap also captured three golds in the men's division.

A double-gold winner in the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, Paz also snagged three silvers in the 50-, 60- and 70-meter events in the individual competition.

What made the feat all the more memorable was the fact that it was Paz's first tournament after dislocating her right elbow following an accident at home last April.

Her elbow was in cast for a month and she was advised by doctors to take it easy. In the process, she missed the national team open competitions which was used to determine the team members for the GP in Malaysia.

"That really made her sad (not making the national team)," said her mother Dade, who along with husband JP, pooled their resources to finance her trip to Malaysia, where organizers decided to let her compete as a last-minute entry.

It was a blessing in disguise of sorts as her entry allowed the Philippines to have a full ladies team with veterans Jennifer Chan and Joann Tabanag. Together, they are ranked No. 8 in the world.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to get in touch with National Archery Association of the Philippines president Brawner to get her side on Paz's stint.

But Amaya's mother said her daughter's success was all that mattered now.

"She wants to put everything behind her and not make any issue out of it," said the doting mother, referring to her daughter's rejected appeals to make the team at the last minute.

Meanwhile, chair Butch Ramirez said the Philippine Sports Commission will reimburse the expenses incurred by Paz in going to Malaysia.

Paz won the individual compound gold medal and sparked the women's RP squad to first place in the team compound in last year's SEAG which the country dominated for the first time.

TOP MARKSMAN ABSENT

Tigers tackle Falcons today

STANDINGS	W	L
Ateneo	5	0
UE	3	2
Adamson	2	2
UST	2	2
NU	2	3
UP	1	3
FEU	1	4

GAMES TODAY
(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)
2 p.m.—UP vs NU (Srs)
4 p.m.—Adamson vs UST (Srs)

LOSING VETERAN GUARD JEMAL VIZCARra did not seem to weaken the Santo Tomas Tigers at all. So coach Pido Jarencio hopes his team will again respond the same way when shooter Jojo Duncil serves his one-game suspension today in the UAAP men's basketball tournament.

"Players can come and go, we can't do anything about it," said Jarencio. "We're making the most out of the situation. Ever since, we're always saying that if someone leaves, we're OK. Anyone can step up."

The Tigers will have to do without Duncil, the league's top scorer, when they dispute solo third against the Adamson Falcons at 4 p.m. today at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

But Jarencio admits that his Tigers are still smarting from their loss to the National Bulldogs, who will tackle the skidding University of the Philippines Maroons earlier at 2 p.m.

"We were frustrated because we were ready (against NU)," said Jarencio. "But I think that was the best game NU played ever. So now we have to double our efforts against Adamson. We have more big guys who are faster. But of course, our confidence level dropped after losing to NU. We've been trying to lift the team's confidence."

The league slapped Duncil, who averages 20.8 points a game, with a one-game suspension for head-butting NU's Dave Catamora on Saturday.

Jarencio has named swingmen Dylan Ababou and Anthony Espiritu to take Duncil's place.

The matchup between the Tigers' rookie sensation Jervy Cruz and the Falcon's hefty center Ken Bono is also anticipated.

Both big men have been regularly posting double-double performances, with Cruz averaging 19 points and 13.2 rebounds and Bono 20.2 markers and 10 boards.

"They showed that they are mature enough to handle the pressure," said Austria, citing Adamson's slim 85-83 victory over UP. "They already know their respective roles. I hope we can continue to bring that kind of intensity and maturity."

The Bulldogs, who at 2-3, have already surpassed their win total for each of the last two seasons, crushed the Tigers, 98-85, after scoring 39 points from the three-point area. Jasmine W. Payo

Yao's foot injury nears full recovery

YAO AP

SHANGHAI, CHIna—Houston Rockets center Yao Ming says he is mostly recovered from a foot injury and is very likely to appear with China in this month's World Championship in Japan, a report said Wednesday.

"Now I am 80 percent OK," Yao was quoted as saying in an interview with the official newspaper China Daily.

"I think the recovery has been quite good and better than we expected," said Yao, interviewed in Beijing where he has been working on his rehabilitation.

The 7-foot-6 Yao broke the fifth metatarsal in the foot on April 10 in Utah and had surgery four days later.

The 26-year-old anchors the Chinese team and fans have been anxiously watching to see whether he would be fit by the tournament, which starts Aug. 19 in Sapporo, Japan. China's opening game is against Italy.

Even if he's fit, Yao said he still needs time to gel with China's other players, most of whom he has little on-court experience with.

"I feel I am getting closer to my best shape. Now what I need to do is train with the whole team. We play in different leagues and have different styles in the games but we have to get used to each other in a very short time," Yao said.

Yao will skip next week's warmup against the United States, but has been placed on the roster for the Aug. 11-15 *AP*

SPORTSWATCH

Fastest Win event at Las Piñas today

THE FASTEST WIN ONE–COCK ULUTAN TAKES SPOTLIGHT AT LAS PIÑAS COLiseum at 8 a.m. today with over 150 cockers and breeders taking part. The fastest win champion will be selected after every five fights and shall receive P5,000. Likewise, each winner will get P1,000 as bonus. Hosts Eddie Alejandro, Jaime and Jonjon Coronado also put up a special prize of P10,000 for the overall fastest win champion. Meanwhile, regular hackfights are lined up at LPC from Monday to Sunday, where the first 20 winners stand to receive P1,000 each. Coliseum manager Alex Tobias said screening of stags intended for the LPC annual 6-stag derby will resume on Saturday and Sunday. Call 873 -1040 and 874-3910 (Julius).

Carino leads MCC non-master winners

TOP SEED MICHAEL CARIÑO DOWNED FERDINAND PALERMO TUESDAY IN 46 moves of a Queen's pawn game to lead other winners at the start of the MCC Non-master standard chess at the lower second floor of St. Francis Square in Mandaluyong City. Also hurdling their assignments were No. 2 Joselito Oliveros, No. 3 Cecil Cuevas, No. 4 Rodolfo Mendoza, No. 12 Geonard Aldave, No. 13 Rodolfo Pates, No. 18 Major Antonio Dizon, Gerard Ferriol and Ed Garrovillas.

Hansen shatters world record; Phelps creams medley rivals

IRVINE, CALIFORNIA—BRENDAN Hansen broke his own world 100-meter breaststroke record, Michael Phelps won the 400m individual medley and Katie Hoff set a US 200 IM record to open the US Swim Championships here Tuesday.

Hansen won in 59.13 seconds to shatter the world record he set on July 8, 2004 at US Olympic qualifying in Long Beach for the Athens Games.

"I didn't think I'd come to nationals and break the 100," Hansen said. "I thought the 200 was more in sight.

"I just wanted the opportunity. Just give me a lane and give me the chance. It was just a matter of me putting all the little things together and just having a good race."

Hansen completed the first 50m in 27.66 seconds and surged to the finish. Scott Usher was a distant second in 1:01.07 with Matthew Lowe third in 1:01.02.

Phelps, the Athens Olympics hero who is aiming for more multi-medal stardom in two years at the Beijing Games, captured the 400 IM in 4:10.16, 1.9 seconds off the world record he set at Athens but 1.37 ahead of runner-up Ryan Lochte.

Phelps was ahead of world-record pace at 200m but fell behind at the breaststroke leg.

PHELPS: Disappointed REUTERS

HANSEN: Eyes on 200 AFP

"That was a pretty disappointing swim," Phelps said. "I feel like I should have gone faster, but that's how it goes. Ryan had a great swim. It's better than we were last year, but by no means is this where I want to be right now."

Hoff won the 200 IM in 2:10.05 to break the American record of 2:10.41 she set last year at the world championships in Montreal and defeat runner-up Whitney Myers by 2.01 seconds.

The world record remains the property of China's Wu Yanyan, who set the mark of 2:09.72 in 1997 at Shanghai.

Klete Keller and Kate Ziegler won 400 freestyle titles. Keller's came in 3:44.27, .16 off his American record and 2.54 ahead of runner-up Peter Vanderkaay. Ziegler won in 4:05.75 with Hoff second in 4:05.83.

"I was hoping for a little faster time, Keller said. "I wanted to do a best time. That was my goal. Ive got to work on going out fast and being able to bring it back that fast. I need two of those first 200s."

Natalie Coughlin won the women's 100 butterfly in 57.78 seconds, edging Rachel Komisarz by one-hundredths of a second.

The meet serves as a qualifier for the US team that will compete at the Pan Pacific Championships later this month at Victoria, Canada. *AFP*

Ginobili banners Argentina cage team

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA—NBA stars Manu Ginobili and Andres Nocioni were among 10 players from the Athens Olympics gold-medal winners selected for Argentina's team to the world basketball championship in Japan this month.

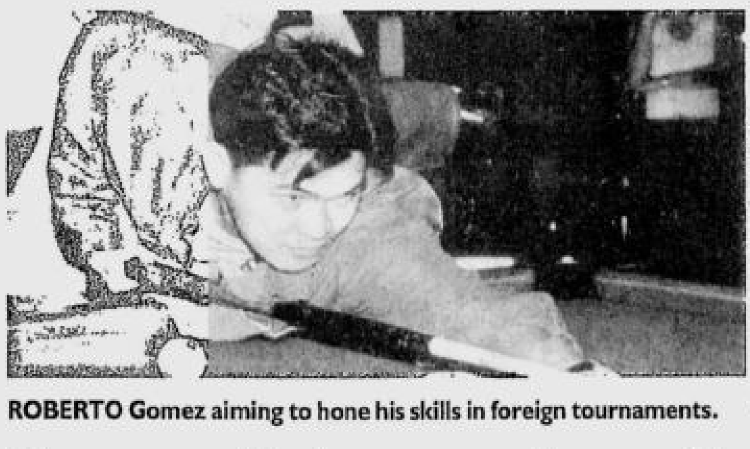
"I'm betting on not touching a group of players who have been playing very well together for several years, and have achieved excellent results," Argentina coach Sergio Hernandez said in disclosing his 12-man roster on Tuesday.

Beside Ginobili and Nocioni were returning veterans Juan Sanchez, Carlos Delfino, Walter Herrmann, Leonardo Gutierrez, Gabriel Fernandez, Luis Scola, Fabricio Oberto and Ruben Wolkowyski.

Rounding out the roster were newcomers Daniel Farabello and Pablo Progioni, who replaced the retiring Alejandro Montecchia and Hugo Sconochini.

Some of the team have been together for internationals since the mid-1990s.

Argentina upset the United States in the Olympic semifinals, then beat Italy, 84-69, for gold. AP



ROBERTO Gomez aiming to hone his skills in foreign tournaments.

Cue artists need gov't assistance to get visas

THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD extend a helping hand to Filipino billiards players securing visas.

Billiards patron Ceferino "Perry" Mariano said the government's lack of support to players traveling abroad to compete in big international tournaments has denied Filipinos the chance to show their talent in the international stage.

Mariano said the US Embassy has proven to be a major headache when seeking a visa.

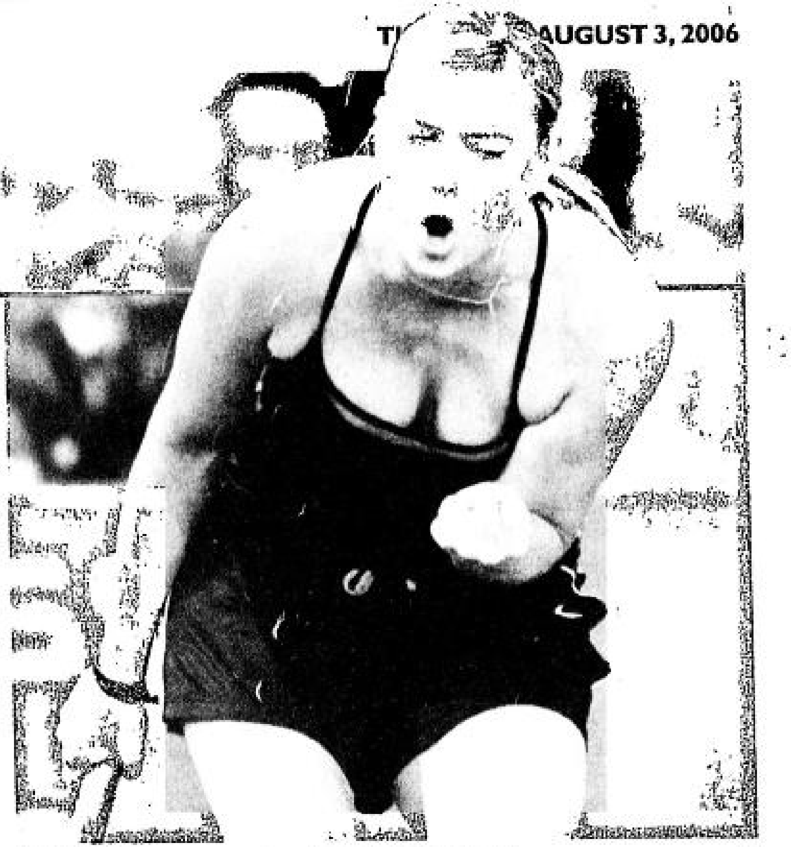
"How can we dominate billiards when some of our future stars cannot even play in foreign tournaments especially in the US circuit because it is difficult to get a US visa," Mariano said.

He said governments in other countries help their players secure travel documents to be able to compete abroad.

Last month, 24-year-old Roberto Gomez of Zamboanga City was denied a US visa despite completing the needed papers.

My papers were complete, I had an invitation from the organizing committee of the IPT (International Pool Tour), I had an endorsement on who would shoulder my expenses, and clippings that I am a billiards player but the US Embassy still denied my visa application," Gomez said. *Marlon Bernardino*

SPORTS



MARIA Sharapova reacts after winning a point. AP

Landis awaits 'B' test result

PARIS—FLOYD LANDIS WAS AWAITING THIS weekend's result of a second doping lab test which could trigger hearings into whether he should be stripped of his Tour de France title for cheating.

The 30-year-old American will send his Spanish lawyer to the Chatenay-Malabry lab near Paris to obtain the result of the "B" sample on Saturday, a Landis spokesman said.

Landis tested positive for unusually high ratio of testosterone to epitestosterone after a tough Tour Alpine stage on July 20—when he staged a remarkable comeback just a day after a poor performance.

Michael Henson, a spokesman for the cyclist, confirmed on Tuesday that a sample from Landis after that 17th stage turned up an 11:1 ratio—far above the 4:1 limit.

If the new sample is negative, Landis would be cleared. If positive, as his lawyers expect, he could become the first winner of cycling's premiere race to lose the crown in a doping case.

In addition, his Phonak team that suspended Landis pending the final results could fire him, and he could also face a two-year ban from racing.

Officials at the International Cycling Union said even if the "B" sample is positive, it could take weeks to decide any penalties against Landis. They emphasized he is innocent until proven guilty.

He will be given "due process" to defend himself before an arbitration panel—which could delay any possible penalties—if he continues to deny the allegations, UCI president Pat McQuaid said.

"It could take weeks," McQuaid said. If the test is confirmed, no penalties could be decided "until the disciplinary process is completed."

It could take even longer if the case goes to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The New York Times reported on Monday that tests on Landis' "A" sample show some of the testosterone in his system was synthetic, putting his defense into question. The report cited a person at the UCI with knowledge of the result.

"We're waiting for conclusive results to come from the 'B' sample," Henson said. He declined to comment about whether synthetic testosterone had been found in the first sample.

Landis has insisted that his body's natural metabolism—not doping—caused that outcome, and said he would undergo further tests to prove it.

The UCI's McQuaid said he had not seen the lab findings, and could not confirm the news report. He and other UCI officials said the union's rule book restricts release of such information.

"It's big news, certainly, but it doesn't change the protocol," McQuaid said. "It's not our policy to give out details about such cases." *AP*

Heat, Lakers hope Halloween's a treat

NEW YORK—SHAQUILLE O'NEAL and the Miami Heat will open defense of the National Basketball Association crown on Halloween as part of the 2006-2007 season schedule announced here Tuesday by the league.

The Heat will host Chicago on October 31 and the Los Angeles Lakers, led by NBA scoring champion Kobe Bryant, will host two-time NBA Most Valuable Player Steve Nash and Phoenix the same night in the showcase opening night matchups.

O'Neal's Heat and his former team, the Lakers, will have a pair of holiday meetings. The Lakers will travel to Miami on Christmas Day and then host the Heat on January 15, Martin Luther King Junior Day.

The civil rights pioneer's holiday will also see Phoenix at Memphis, the city where King was assassinated at a motel.

The second night of the NBA season, November 1, features LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers playing host to Washington and the Los Angeles Clippers visiting Phoenix. *AFP*

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Agassi loses; Safin advances

WASHINGTON—FIVE-TIME CHAMPION ANDRE Agassi was upset by Italian qualifier Andrea Stoppini, 6-4, 6-3, in the second round of the Legg Mason Classic on Tuesday. Also, sixth-seeded Sebastien Grosjean of France fell to Wesley Moodie of South Africa, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3, and Kenneth Carlsen of Denmark defeated ninth-seeded Paradorn Srichaphan of Thailand, 4-6, 7-6 (6), 6-3. Top-seeded James Blake avoided the upset bug, advancing past fellow American Kevin Kim, 7-5, 3-6, 6-2. Former world No. 1 Marat Safin beat 15th-seeded Nicolas Mahut of France, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, and 11th-seeded Arnaud Clement of France downed qualifier Ryan Sweeting of the United States 6-2, 6-1. *AP*

Sharapova, Hingis dump Acura rivals

SAN DIEGO—SECOND SEED Maria Sharapova overcame a slow start against fellow Russian Vasilisa Bardina before reeling off 10 of the last 11 games to record a 6-4 6-1 second-round victory at the Acura Classic on Tuesday.

Earlier, eighth seed Martina Hingis marched into the third round with a 6-2 6-3 win over American Meilen Tu.

In search of her first title of the summer hardcourt season, Sharapova fell 4-1 behind to the feisty 18-year-old qualifier before warming to the task of winning the match.

"I felt pretty good after she broke me early," Sharapova told reporters.

Bardina surprised Sharapova when they began their warm-up by starting at the net.

"She pulled all the tricks out of her bag except for the win," Sharapova added. "I don't know anything about her except that every time I see her dad, he walks barefoot. I think that's cool."

HINGIS: Two-time champ AP

Two-time champion Hingis, who is making her first appearance at the tournament since 2001, mixed up her strokes adeptly against the veteran Tu in a routine victory.

It was the Swiss' first match since she was upset in the third round of Wimbledon by Japan's Ai Sugiyama last June. *Reuters*

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IN THIS ISSUE
- **Petron allots** P50.6M more for autogas program /B3
- **2007 inflation** rate seen at 4.3% /B4

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GMA seeks ₱1.137-T budget for 2007

Increased allocation for social, economic services

By Michelle V. Remo

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo will seek a national budget of P1.137 trillion in 2007 to support a massive investment program, the Department of Budget and Management said yesterday.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the 2007 budget proposal was a pro-growth measure that increases spending in all areas except for debt service, thanks to robust tax collection.

The government has announced an infrastructure program that will cost P372.02 billion over the next four years, to be spent on roads, rail systems, airports, ports, and other basic requirements.

The 2007 budget is based on the assumption the Philippines will post a 5.7-percent gross domestic product (GDP) growth, an inflation rate of 4.3 to 4.8 percent and an exchange rate of P51 to P53 to the dollar.

Debt service, which has traditionally taken up the biggest slice of government budgets, is expected to fall to 28.8 percent of the 2007 budget compared to 36.2 percent this year, Andaya said.

The proposed budget for next year will include P318 billion in interest payments on the government's burgeoning debt. While interest payment will still have a huge share of the budget, Andaya said, this would be lower than last year's P340 billion.

Proposed spending on health, education, housing and related matters was expected to rise by 30 percent in 2007 while spending on agriculture, land reform, roads and tourism would rise by 40 percent.

Andaya said social services would account for P335.4 billion of the proposed 2007 budget compared to last year's

GMA/ B3

Customs exceeds July goal by 7%

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS REPORTED THAT it has exceeded its revenue-collection target for July and expressed confidence in meeting its full-year goal.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the BOC collected P16.46 billion worth of duties and excise and value-added taxes from imported goods last month. This was 7-percent higher than the revenue agency's target of P15.44 billion for the month.

The July collection performance was boosted by the P1.4 billion in oil duties and taxes paid by Petron Corp. and the P1 billion in rice duties remitted by the National Food Authority. The two made the payments last July 31, the BOC said.

The BOC's collection in July, which Morales said was still preliminary and therefore could go higher pending additional revenue collection data, brought the agency's total collections for the first seven months of the year to P111.26 billion.

The seven-month revenue figure was 6-percent higher than the BOC's P105.14-billion target for the January-to-July period.

The BOC's revenue performance in July made it consistently meet its monthly collection targets since January. Morales said the BOC was poised to meet not only its official full-year collection goal of P197 billion, but also the internal target of P200 billion.

The Department of Finance, the BOC's head agency, had asked the latter to turn in P3 billion more than its official target to help the national government post a better-than-expected budget deficit. The BOC is the second-biggest revenue earner among line agencies after the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

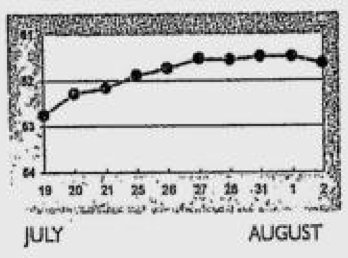
The national government has set a budget deficit ceiling of P125 billion for 2006, or lower than last year's actual deficit of P146.8 billion.

Morales earlier said the BOC's ability to surpass its monthly revenue collection targets was attributed to reform programs, including tighter audit of shipments and continued

CUSTOMS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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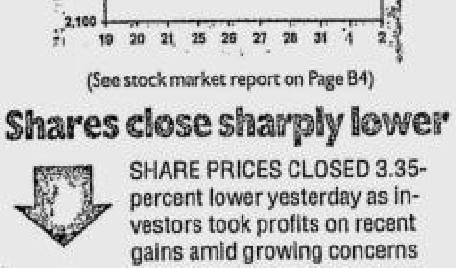
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 2, 2006

¥ 114.44 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 2, 2006

GOLD: $650.50-651.00
As of 5 p.m., Aug. 2, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

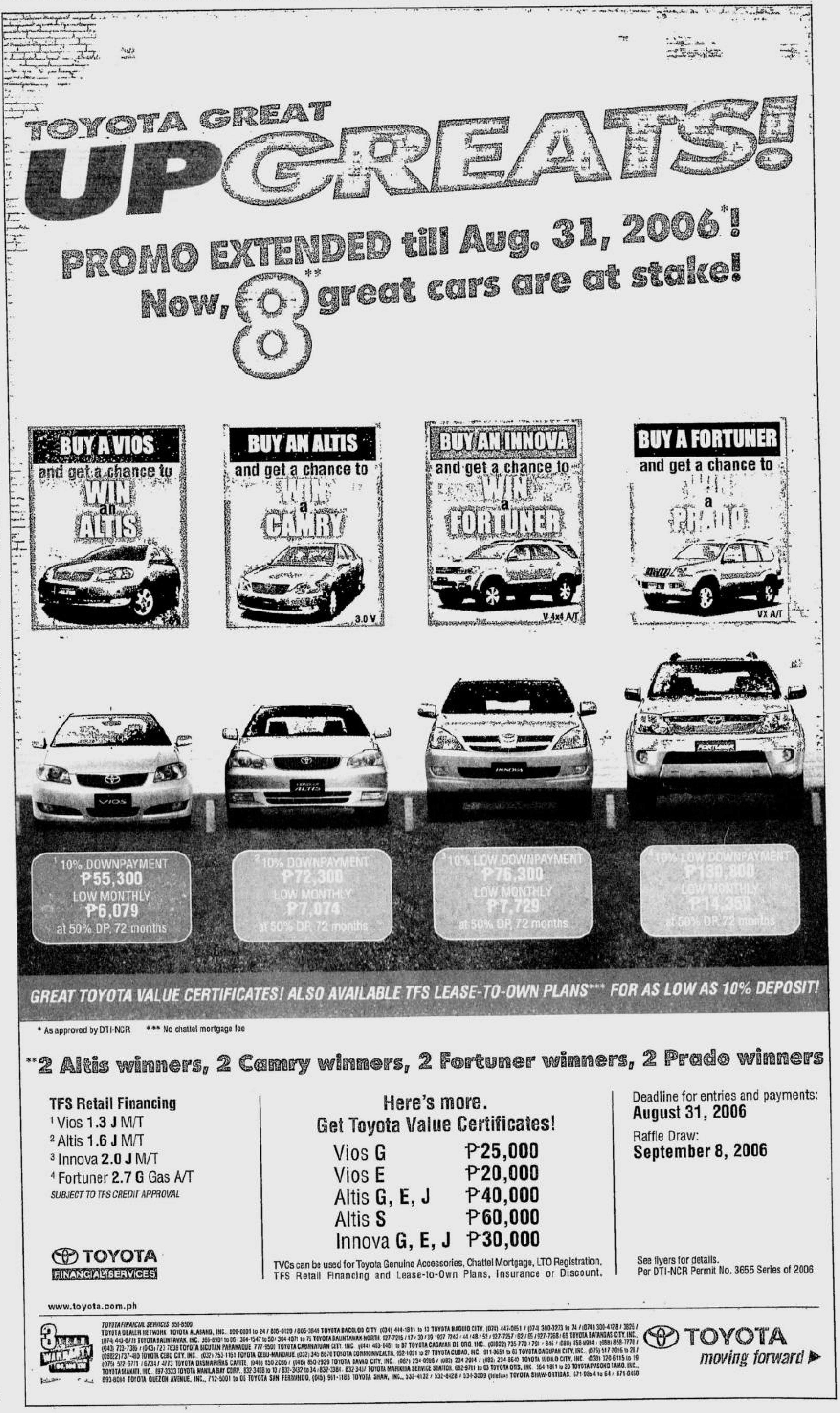
Shares close sharply lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 3.35-percent lower yesterday as investors took profits on recent gains amid growing concerns the US central bank will raise interests rate again next week, dealers said.

They said the latest US data had sparked fresh inflation worries on Wall Street overnight which had set the tone for a negative day here.

The composite index ended down 79.96 points at 2,308.37, its lowest level in a week. It traded between 2,297.91 and 2,388.33 points.

SHARES/ B2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TOYOTA moving forward

Customs exceeds July goal by 7%

From page B1

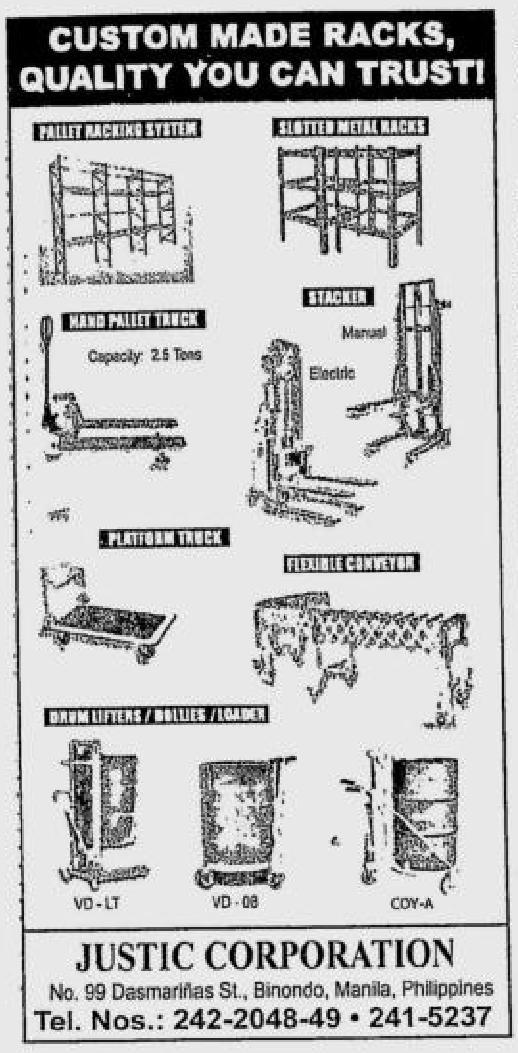
technology enhancement.

The Customs chief also said he has implemented a reshuffle of heads of various BOC ports. Better performing ones were assigned to bigger ports, he said.

Morales said the reshuffle was also aimed at ensuring that the BOC and revenue personnel were able to meet their respective collection targets to avoid being penalized under the Lateral Attrition Law, which takes effect this year.

The law provides a mechanism for granting revenue collectors incentives and penalties based on their collection performance vis-a-vis their targets. Those who will fail to meet their targets face the possibility of being fired.

Michelle V. Remo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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

TODAY, ALMOST TWO YEARS AFTER THIS cute administration of Gloriaetta bidded the Masinloc (Zambales) power plant, the joint congressional power commission starts an inquiry into the, well, "deal."

As everybody knows, except perhaps our busy lawmakers, the declared winner in the biding—the YNN consortium—has yet to pay for the plant. After two years! Recently, the government gave the consortium yet more time to come up with the money.

To top it all, the government firm in charge of selling all the many state-owned power plants, the one called PSALM, did not seem to mind. On the contrary, PSALM even granted YNN a lot of leeway for reasons that only PSALM and YNN knew.

Three times, for instance, PSALM extended the deadline for YNN to deliver the upfront payment of about $227 million. Again—that's the UPFRONT payment. You are supposed to give it right after PSALM made the award. It has been almost two years now.

At the time of the bidding, the then four-month-old YNN only had P625,000 in capital. Yet PSALM allowed such a company to bid for a plant that, at present value, if it were new, will take at least $500 million to build.

Word is going around that YNN did not have a decent office, it had no telephone, and it did not even have a TIN (tax identification number). Our lawmakers surely want to know in the congressional hearing if PSALM even bothered with those facts.

Precisely, the law tasked PSALM to screen the bidders. As it turned out, YNN was a mere "broker," needing to sell its contract to foreign investors, thereby making for itself a handsome profit of $8 million.

Surely, the commission will want to know what made PSALM so blind to the qualifications of YNN that PSALM not only allowed YNN to join the bidding, PSALM even gave this moneyless broker concession after concession.

In the first place, some lawmakers doubt that the Epira, which is the law spelling out the privatization program for the power sector, even allows YNN to sell the entire contract with PSALM.

Really, this can be quite an exciting inquiry.

For the sake of the millions of power users in this country with the second highest rates in Asia, it better be not a red herring hearing at all.

* * *

REVENUE Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag, according to news reports following the recent BIR anniversary celebration, cited a shortfall in the collection target of the BIR of about P3 billion.

Again—that was the anniversary speech of the BIR commissioner.

If Buñag really intended to highlight such a failure of his agency on such a supposedly rah-rah-rah occasion, I think he should have his head checked.

But wait a minute. Reports also mentioned that, in terms of its own operations—meaning, if you consider only the factors within the BIR's control—the agency actually exceeded its collection target by more than P1 billion.

And to think, it was a high target. It meant that the BIR had to collect some 30 percent more than last year's actual collection. And the BIR exceeded it. Wow! I thought it was praiseworthy.

I mean, come on, shouldn't Buñag highlight it instead, if only to motivate the BIR field workers to do more and, thus, help this cute administration raise the money for its dream infrastructure projects?

Now, my info is that Buñag has been egging the Department of Finance to change the computation of the BIR targets, as against the actual collection. His main beef has been the "withholding tax" on T-bills issued by the Bureau of the Treasury.

In the BIR collection figures during the first semester this year, for instance, the big shortfall actually came from the low withholding tax on T-bills that was credited to the BIR collection.

The shortfall was so big that it even ate up the "excess" in the BIR's collection, even resulting in an overall shortfall of P3 billion.

What was the culprit behind the shortfall then if not the T-bills? Yet, ironically, the issuance of T-bills is not up to the BIR. It is up to the Bureau of the Treasury.

If the Treasury does not issue T-bills, say, when the market is not right, the BIR's overall target automatically goes haywire. No T-bill issue, no withholding tax collection.

Yet in the past, news reports on the government's revenue collection often extolled the Bureau of the Treasury for "exceeding its targets." The BIR and the Bureau of Customs always got media flak for their target "shortfall."

Lately, however, it seems that the IMF studied the collection record of the Treasury and found it wanting. Yes, the bureau set low targets, which of course it could exceed easily, no sweat.

The point is that somebody in the Treasury knew how to use media. In comparison, Buñag just did his work. No wonder, even good news about his bureau comes out as bad. That's life in the public arena.

* * *

WORD has it that the Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo bought into Pacific Telecom, which is the dominant operator in the Mariana Islands (where Saipan is), owned by the local Delgado family. (You know, shipping, banking, telecoms, airport service, etc.) Sumitomo injected $25 million, taking 25 percent ownership of the company. Thus, with 75 percent control, the Delgado family will retain management. Last year, the family bought Pacific Telecom from the US-based Verizon after three years of tough regulatory process. With the capital from Sumitomo, Pacific Telecom is expanding operations to Hawaii and Guam. Oh, and by the way, it is not an accident that those areas have huge Filipino communities.

Shares close sharply lower

From page B1

The broader all-shares index fell 39.68 points to 1,429.01.

Losers swamped gainers 84 to 8, with 32 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 1.8 billion shares worth P1.35 billion.

"Wall Street's decline is one of the reasons and a big part of (yesterday's) fall was also because investors decided to lock in gains," said Oliver Plana of Asiasec Equities.

"The Philippine market has outperformed its peers in the past couple of days," he added.

Local stocks hit an 11-week high on Monday as investors found inspiration from mostly upbeat corporate results.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's annual speech to the nation last week where she unveiled the government's plans to spend heavily on infrastructure to spur economic growth had also helped sentiment.

Online broker 2TradeAsia.com said renewed concerns about US interest rates and volatile oil prices due to ongoing tension in the Middle East had capped the market's optimism.

American stocks fell overnight after data showed inflation remained high and the manufacturing sector was robust, suggesting a strong economy would give the Fed more room to raise rates further without stifling growth.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone led the retreat, falling P85 to P2,005 while rival Globe Telecom shed P30 to P980 on profit-taking after the country's second biggest telecoms firm reported a 38-percent year-on-year rise in first-half net profit and announced a cash dividend.

Property firm Ayala Land fell 75 centavos to P13 while parent Ayala Corp. shed P20 to P412.50.

AFP

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GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo, Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Armed Forces of the Philippines, through the AFP Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all service providers/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project/s of Philippine Navy

Nomenclature/ Activity	Approved Budget	Date/Time		Price of Bid Documents (non-refundable)
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline for Submission/ Opening of Bids	
LOT 1 PB-AFPBAC-PN-136-06 Supply and delivery of Ammunition Ctg 40mm HE LV and Ctg 40mm HE KV	P 12,572,000.00	Aug. 17, 2006 9:00 am	Aug. 29, 2006 9:00 am	P 3,000.00
LOT 2 PB-AFPBAC-PN-137-06 Supply and delivery of Ammunition Ctg 60mm HE	P 2,800,000.00			P 3,000.00
LOT 3 PB-AFPBAC-PN-138-06 Supply and delivery of Ammunition Ctg 81mm HE	P 4,144,000.00			P 3,000.00
LOT 4 PB-AFPBAC-139-06 Supply and delivery of Ammunition CtG 5.56mm Match, Ctg 7.62mm Match and Ctg 5.56 mm Sub-Sonic	P 2,601,444.04			P 3,000.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Requirements. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference/s, Evaluation of Bids, Post-qualification and Award of Contract shall governed by the pertinent provisions of RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the AFPBAC Secretariat at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below. The method of payment will be on Cash. In addition, representatives are required to present a Certification/Special Power of Attorney from the principal that they are authorized to transact business on behalf of their principal before issuance of the bid documents.

The Venue for the pre-bid conference, submission, receipt and opening of bids will be at Multi-Purpose Hall, Headquarters Philippine Navy, 2335 Pres Roxas Blvd Manila

The Armed Forces of the Philippines reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Office of the Bids and Awards Committee
G/F Bulwagang Syquio, Camp General Emilio Aguinaldo
Quezon City
Contact Person: Mr Joseph Z Sison
Tel Nr: 911-6001 loc. 6485/6486
Fax Nr: 911-6001 loc. 6489

(Sgd.) ALFREDO D ABUEG JR
Rear Admiral, AFP
Chairman

(PDI – August 3, 2006)

DAVAO CITY WATER DISTRICT
J.P. Laurel Ave., Davao City
Tel. # 221-9400

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

1. The Davao City Water District, with the Approved Budget for 2006 intends to apply the sum *(see schedule under 2)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under contracts as listed below. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.
2. The Davao City Water District now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the following:

PACKAGE	DESCRIPTION	Approved Budget for the Contract	BID SECURITY (1% OF ABC)	COST OF BID DOCUMENTS
1	VARIOUS SIZES OF G.I. PIPES	P 380,000.00	P 3,800.00	P 1,000.00
2	250 ROLLS P.E. PIPES	600,000.00	6,000.00	1,000.00
3	VARIOUS SIZES OF uPVC PIPES & FITTINGS	4,845,610.00	48,456.10	2,500.00
4	VARIOUS C.I. FITTINGS	5,153,020.00	51,530.20	2,500.00
5	VARIOUS SIZES OF GATE VALVES	1,500,000.00	15,000.00	1,500.00
6	4 UNITS CONDUCTIVITY /TDS/ SALINITY PORTABLE METER	320,000.00	3,200.00	1,000.00
7	23 UNITS DATA LOGGER & 1 SET DATA RETRIEVER & COMMUNICATION	2,300,000.00	23,000.00	2,000.00
8	1 SET - GPS TOTAL STATION SYSTEM	2,169,660.00	21,696.60	2,000.00
9	1 SYSTEM - MONITORING & CONTROL SYSTEM FOR TALOMO SUMP 1 & 2	3,500,000.00	35,000.00	2,000.00
10	24 UNITS - PENTIUM 4, PERSONAL COMPUTERS	1,920,000.00	19,200.00	1,500.00
11	VARIOUS COMPUTER HARDWARES	698,250.00	6,982.50	1,000.00
12	VARIOUS COMPUTER SOFTWARES	857,600.00	8,576.00	1,000.00
13	2 UNITS - SOFTSTARTER	4000,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00
14	VARIOUS LINESHAFT & SPIDER GUIDE	607,100.00	6,071.00	1,000.00

The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from *Davao City Water District* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. up to 5:00 p.m.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of non refundable fee in the amount *(stated in item no.2)*. The method of payment will be on Cash Basis. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The *Davao City Water District* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on *August 17, 2006, at 9:00 o'clock A.M.* at *DCWD BAC-A Secretarial Office. J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City.*
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before the *bidding schedule time and date at 9:00 o'clock A.M.* All Bids must be accompanied by a *Bid Security* in the form of *Cash or Manager's check* in the amount *(stated in item no. 2)*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be at the *DCWD BAC-A Secretarial Office, J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada, Davao City on the following schedule:*

PACKAGE No.	BIDDING SCHEDULE, TIME & DATE
1, 2 & 3	August 29, 2006 @ 9:00 A.M.
4, 5 & 6	August 29, 2006 @ 2:00 P.M.
7, 8 & 9	August 30, 2006 @ 9:00 A.M.
10, 11 & 12	August 30, 2006 @ 2:00 P.M.
13 & 14	August 31, 2006 @ 9:00 A.M.

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

9. The *Davao City Water District* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Davao City Water District
BAC-A
J.P. Laurel Ave., Bajada Davao City
Tel. No. : 221-9400 (8000)
E-mail add : dcwd@davao-water.gov.ph
Fax No. : 224-5392
Website www.davao-water.gov.ph

(Sgd.) VIRGINIA S. MARIMON
BAC-A Chairperson

(PDI--July 28 & Aug. 3, 2006)

Petron allots P50.6M more for autogas program

Firm to expand coverage of alternative transport fuel to Metro Manila

By Abigail L. Ho

IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNment's alternative fuels program, the board of Petron Corp. has approved a P50.6-million supplemental budget to bankroll the oil firm's autogas, or liquefied petroleum gas for transport, program for the rest of 2006.

The company said in a recent disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange that Petron's AutoLPG Program for 2006 was in support of the "environmental policies of the government for cleaner fuels."

Even before Petron started marketing its Xtend-branded autogas in its stations, it was already selling the fuel at taxi terminals, mostly in Cebu.

This year, however, the oil refiner started becoming more aggressive in selling the product, setting up autogas pumps in more of its stations in Metro Manila.

Petron vice president for marketing Jose Campos Jr. said Petron now had autogas pumps at seven of its stations, with five more coming up before year's end.

In an earlier interview, Petron president Khalid Al-Faddagh said autogas was a viable venture for the company, judging from the initial reception of the fuel by taxi operators in Cebu.

"The volumes are very encouraging. It's a good choice for taxi fleets, and the benefits are very quantifiable," he said.

He said the oil firm was considering tie-ups with taxi operators all over Metro Manila.

Apart from the additional autogas budget, the Petron board also took up a funding request of P59.5 million to install fire-fighting facilities at its Bataan refinery.

This was in compliance with National Fire Protection Association standards, which require the installation of fire-fighting facilities "to ensure continuous water supply and increased water deluge requirements to address fire emergencies at the refinery," according to Petron.

Petron closed the first half with a net income of P2.7 billion, 16-percent better than the P2.3 billion it posted in the same period last year.

Sales revenues likewise rose 25 percent to P108.45 billion from P86.74 billion a year ago, on the back of strong export sales and favorable international prices.

Makro boosts expansion drive

By Ronnel W. Domingo

WHOLESALE MERCHANDISE SUPPLIER Pilipinas Makro Inc. recently opened its newest store in Mandaluyong City, the firm's 15th in the country with investments running at about P300 million.

The opening came in the wake of a strengthened expansion drive that saw Makro scrapping its membership fees and accepting credit card and check payments within the past year.

Makro started as a membership-based wholesale supplier for "professional" customers such as hotels, restaurants, caterers and small- and medium-sized retail stores.

Back then, those who wanted to become members must show a business permit to be accepted.

The company has since opened its store to end-users or those who buy items for home or personal use.

During the opening which Vice President Noli de Castro attended, company president and managing director Bunny Khurana led a ceremonial donation of "sari-sari" store and "carinderia" packages as contributions to the government's livelihood projects.

"We are one with the government in its fervent effort to present ways by which the Filipinos can find opportunities to provide for their families and become self-sustaining citizens," Khurana said.

Makro prides itself as a pioneer of the self-service, cash-and-carry distribution system in the country and offers thousands of wet and dry food and non-food products.

Also, Khurana said Marko now carries smaller packs that make it more affordable for the budgets of small *sari-sari* stores as well as other multi-packs to address the needs of smaller businesses.

Pilipinas Makro—a subsidiary of SHV of The Netherlands—is also partly owned by SM Investments Inc. and Ayala Land Inc.

In 2004, the company announced it had set aside at least P2 billion for store improvements, renovations and efficiency measures aimed at widening the firm's nationwide operations.

Makro's 14 other stores are in Cainta, Rizal; Imus, Cavite; Novaliches, Quezon City; Sucat, Parañaque City; North Harbor in Manila; Pampanga; Batangas; Cubao, Quezon City, and the cities of Makati, Las Piñas, Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and Iloilo.

GMA seeks P1.137-T budget for 2007

From page B1

P256.8 billion. Social services include those related to health, education and housing.

Education alone would get a P134-billion share, which would be 22-percent higher than last year's P112 billion, the budget chief noted.

Andaya said that of the proposed budget for next year, economic services—such as agrarian reform, road development, and programs to boost tourism and agriculture—would account for P239 billion compared with last year's P170.3 billion.

The Department of Public Works and Highways will get P71.5 billion, while the Department of Transportation and Communication will account for P17.5 billion. The budget for the DPWH and the DOTC will be higher by 43 percent and 111 percent, respectively, consistent with the government's pump-priming program.

Andaya said the government's ability to increase its spending for social services next year would be made possible by the expected increase in revenue collection from several tax measures that have already been implemented.

The government expects to collect P1.118 trillion worth of revenues in 2007, bulk of which are in the form of taxes. The expected revenues for next year are 15-percent higher than the P969 billion programmed to be collected in 2006.

The anticipated growth in revenue collections is anchored on the revenue-raising measures already implemented by the Arroyo administration, including the VAT Reform Law and the Lateral Attrition Law.

The VAT law basically expanded the coverage of the value-added tax to include previously exempted products like oil and electricity and raised the tax rate from to 12 percent from 10 percent.

The lateral attrition law provides a mechanism for the granting of monetary incentives or penalty for revenue collectors based on their ability to meet their respective collection targets. Those who will fail to meet their targets face possible dismissal. *With a report from AFP*

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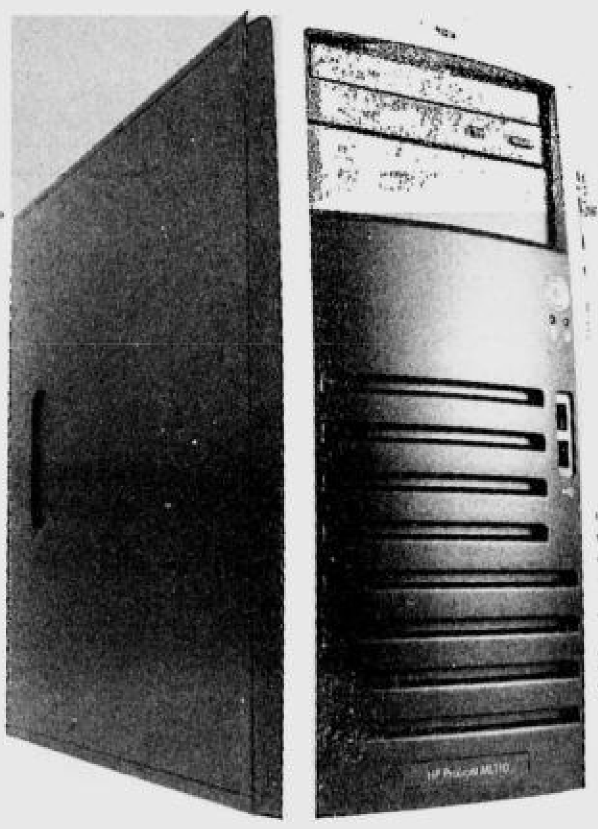

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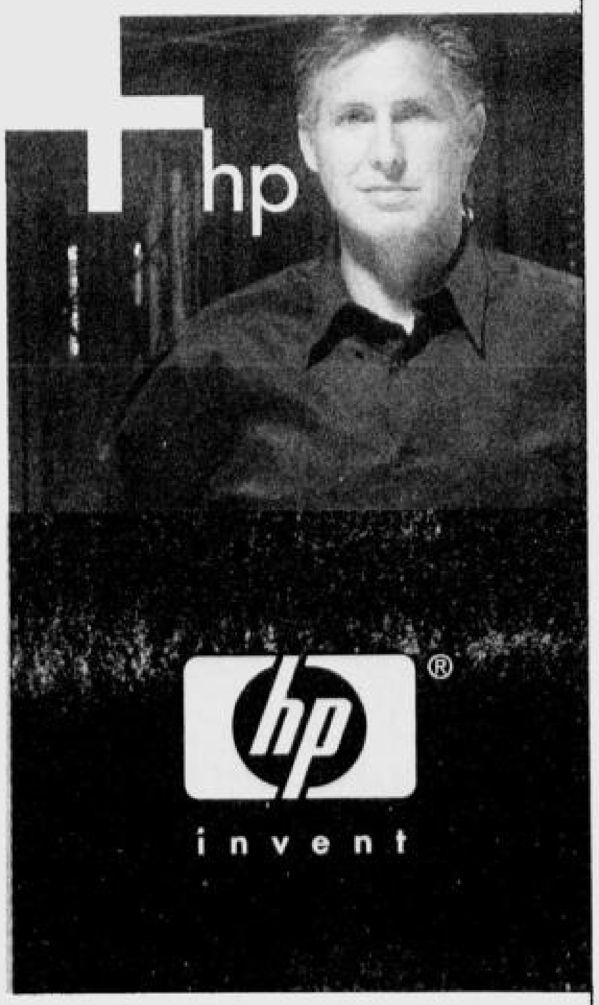

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'07 inflation rate seen at 4.3%

GDP growth target for next year scaled down to 5.7 percent from 6.1-6.5 percent

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT SAID INFLATION would likely slow down next year to as low as 4.3 percent, as the expected increase in oil supply would help temper the rate of increases in the prices of consumer products.

The Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), the interagency body tasked with setting the government's economic policies and targets, said the inflation rate next year would likely be between 4.3 percent and 4.8 percent, against the projected 7.3-7.9 percent this year.

This inflation forecast for next year was used as a basis in setting the proposed 2007 national budget at P1.137 trillion national budget, which the Department of Budget and Management submitted to the Cabinet last Tuesday.

In setting this year's inflation forecast at 7.3-7.9 percent, the DBCC took into consideration the implementation of the VAT Reform Law, which raised the VAT rate from 10 percent to 12 percent and expanded its coverage.

Economists, however, are projecting a lower-than-expected inflation rate for 2006. They said the average rate for the whole year would likely be at 6.4 percent mainly because of the better-than-anticipated foreign exchange rate movement.

The peso has strengthened to the 51 to a dollar level, better than the 55 to $1 assumed by the government economic team for 2006.

Victor Abola, economist from the University of Asia and the Pacific, agreed that the inflation rate for next year would settle below 5 percent. He said this was because oil supply would likely increase amid the expected opening of several new oil fields in various countries.

Abola noted that Russia, Kazakhstan, Brazil and Canada had announced plans to open new sources of oil for the benefit of global consumers.

He said new sources of oil would help keep prices stable despite conflicts in the Middle East, which currently accounts for about a third of the world's oil supply.

The Philippines, being a major oil importer, is easily affected by the volatility of oil prices in the world market. The country imports at least 90 percent of its oil requirements.

Also, the DBCC had scaled down its gross domestic product growth target for 2007.

From the original target of 6.1-6.5 percent, the DBCC said GDP growth next year might reach only 5.7 percent.

The original forecast was deemed too optimistic, especially in the light of the failure of Congress to pass the national budget for this year.

The mere reenactment of the 2005 budget this year would hinder the implementation of many infrastructure projects of the government this year. This is expected to adversely affect GDP growth next year.

WPI H1 net hits P146M

HOTEL OPERATOR Waterfront Philippines Inc. said its unaudited net income rose to P146 million in the first half, from its restated net income of P5 million in the same period last year.

This was realized after it put a lid on expenses, grew its revenues and booked non-recurring charges last year.

In a statement, the company said revenue grew 8 percent to P939 million in the first six months from year-ago's P871 million. Operating profit surged 15 percent to P392 million in the first six months, from last year's P341 million.

"The better year-to-date financial performance was attributed to the aggressive expansion of the company's international and domestic distribution network as well as its continued thrust to improve its products and services," WPI said in a statement.

WPI's food and beverage division posted a 13 percent increase in sales to P345 million in the first half, from P305 million in the same semester in 2005. Sales for the rooms division climbed 5 percent to P337 million in the first half from P321 million in last year.

Company officials were bullish that despite the entry of new competitors in the cities where the firm operates, WPI's revenues and profits would continue to grow and even surpass last year's revenue.

To further boost revenue, WPI earlier said it would spend P250 million this year for the second phase of the hotel group's renovation program. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

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NIELSON AIRPORT—PAL'S BIRTHPLACE
Sixty years ago, on July 31, 1946, a Philippine Airlines Douglas DC-4 Skymaster, carrying a full load of 40 American soldiers, took off from Nielson Airport in Makati for California. Nielson, situated on a hard tract of land in the then sparsely populated town of Makati, was the primary air gateway between Manila and the rest of the country. It was from Nielson that PAL's first flight, from Manila to Baguio, took off in March 1941. In 1946, it became Manila's window to the world with the launch of PAL's international services. Left photo shows PAL officers and staff led by president Andres Soriano (standing at right in a white suit, holding a black hat) in front of the Nielson control tower on that historic day. In right panel, the current PAL management team—led by chair Lucio C. Tan (center), president Jaime J. Bautista (fourth from left) and EVP Henry So Uy (fourth from right), poses in front of the old tower, now the site of the Filipinas Heritage Library along Makati Avenue. With them are senior vice presidents Andrew L. Huang and Julio F. Hernandez, and vice presidents Rolando Estabillo, Bonifacio Sam, Cesar Lamberte and Francisco Yngente IV.

Bank controversies stress need for reform

By Daxim L. Lucas

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE LOCAL FINANCIAL COMmunity was rocked by two very discreet controversies in recent months, both of which have far reaching implications on the public.

The first issue was a series of massive withdrawals on bank products called unit investment trust funds (UITFs) that led to, according to some banking sources, losses of as much as P150 billion for two months.

The second controversy is the discovery by regulators, and the subsequent probe, of the alleged price fixing activities on the electronic benchmark used by most banks to price their commercial loans.

At the core of both events are the issues of investor protection and transparency, the absence of which often leads to bank clients paying more than they should, or worse, losing money.

Having weathered several crises in the past decades, one would think that the local banking community would know better by now how to avoid these pitfalls.

But even the bankers, themselves, concede that more needs to be done to protect or even improve the integrity of the banking system.

The UITF 'run'

"These events show that there is a real need for reforms in the financial community," Bankers Association of the Philippines executive director Leonilo G. Coronel said in an interview. "Ultimately, we need these reforms to protect the money of the investing public."

> Those who made money were sophisticated investors, while those who got 'burned' were the less savvy ones

In late May, reports started to surface about banks' trust department clients heaving for the exit *en masse*, in a rush to liquidate their UITFs amid falling investment values.

The UITF is a new trust fund product that pools money from investors and is administered by a trust entity, normally a bank. UITFs must be revalued on a daily basis depending on the market price of their underlying securities, to determine how much the investment of a client is worth at any given time.

According to a subsequent investigation by the central bank, the UITF "run" was caused by a confluence of factors that started when interest rates started to rise around the world.

"As interest rates moved up, the net asset values per unit of the UITFs, particularly that of the bond funds, moved down as mark-to-market losses were reflected," Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Nestor A. Espenilla said during a recent presentation explaining the crisis.

CORONEL

"Jittery investors withdrew from the UITFs and fund managers were forced to sell their bond assets to fund the withdrawals," he explained. "It became a spiral: the more the investors withdrew, the more the fund managers sold the UITF assets, the more the interest rate increased, the more NAVPUs fell and this became a vicious cycle."

For the BAP, several years worth of stalling the proposed—and unpopular—market reforms aggravated the crisis.

Bond exchange

"During the mad rush for liquidation, the banks' trust officers had little choice but to run to their treasurers to sell their bonds (which accounted for 80 percent of all UITF assets, on the average)," said Coronel.

A longtime advocate for the creation of a bond exchange, the BAP official said that if there was such a mechanism, trust officers acting on clients' orders to sell their UITFs could have gone to an organized bond market where there would be several players buying and selling simultaneously. At present, there is only one outlet and that is the bank's treasury department.

Coronel argued that the existence of a bond exchange might have given UITF clients better prices and, therefore, result in lower losses during what the central bank described as a "mini run."

From the peak of P324.3 billion in April , the value of UITFs in the local banking system was estimated to have dropped to P206.8 billion in May. Total placements further declined in June and July, although at a slower pace.

Winners, losers

Market sources said the most of those who made money from the investment—those who bought and sold early—were sophisticated investors, while those who got "burned" were the less savvy ones, including many who may not have been fully aware of the risks involved in buying UITFs.

According to Coronel, a bond exchange, where prices are visible to the investing public on a real-time basis would have also helped calm the jittery market and prevent UITF holders from cashing out at the bottom, and absorbing large losses on their investments.

"With a bond exchange, it would have been easier to explain to them (UITF holders) that the losses would have been temporary, and that they would eventually recover their investments if they held on," he said. "It's just like the stock market." *(To be continued.)*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 2, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	31.5	32	30.5	31	2,759,200
Bank of the Phil. Islands	52.5	52.5	51	51.5	1,887,800
China Banking Corp.	890	890	890	890	1,340
Citystate Savings Bank	20.5	20.5	20.5	20.5	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	1,560,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	83.5	84.5	83.5	84.5	54,900
International Exch. Bank	30	38	30	38	4,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38	38	35.5	36.5	1,022,600
Philippine National Bank	35	35	34.5	35	44,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	10,000
Security Bank Corp.	47	47	47	47	41,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	44.5	44.5	44	44	91,800
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	90,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	29	29	29	29	500
Manulife Financial Corp.	1630	1630	1630	1630	40
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	213	213	213	213	20,000
Ivantage Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.3	1.3	1,800,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	43	43	42	42	253,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	43	43	42	42	1,912,300
Manila Electric Co. A	15.75	15.75	15.5	15.5	392,400
Manila Electric Co. B	24.5	24.75	24	24.5	1,246,400
Manila Water Co. Inc.	8.3	8.3	8	8.2	6,873,000
Petron Corp.	4.25	4.25	4.1	4.2	6,449,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.25	0.27	0.24	0.27	1,180,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	2,000
Cadp Group Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.5	11,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23	23	23	23	22,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	33	33	32.5	33	128,600
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	2,399,000
San Miguel Corp. A	65.5	65.5	64	65.5	110,100
San Miguel Corp. B	73	73	71	71.5	463,100
Universal Robina Corp.	18.75	18.75	18.5	18.5	431,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	300,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.56	1.58	3,546,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.9	70,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	100,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	70,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	60,000
Global Equities, Inc.	0.36	0.39	0.34	0.36	338,640,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	425	425	407.5	412.5	98,970
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	785,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	28,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.8	1.82	1.8	1.82	429,000
APC Group Inc.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	1,030,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	250,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	50,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	3.05	3.05	2.85	2.85	645,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1	1	1	1	123,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.5	10.75	10.5	10.75	37,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.08	1.08	10,004,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.05	4.1	486,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	32,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6	144,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	6,000,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.55	0.55	270,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	4,550,000
SM Investments Corp.	224	224	224	224	69,200
South China Resources Inc.	0.88	0.9	0.87	0.9	440,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.075	0.075	0.07	0.0725	16,400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.12	0.12	580,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	13	13.25	13	13	6,440,700
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	970,000
Belle Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.04	3,147,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.32	10,140,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	3,054,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	20,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	2,550,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,030,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.039	0.039	0.039	0.039	200,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.32	1.32	21,346,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.07	0.07	1,100,000
Interport Res.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	30,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	1,000,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.39	0.39	2,100,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.44	1.46	34,427,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.24	0.25	10,180,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	620,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	75,100
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.37	0.38	0.36	0.37	8,850,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.8	7.9	5,080,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.0725	0.075	9,000,000
SERVICE					
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16.25	16.75	16.25	16.75	112,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	3,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.28	1.3	1.26	1.3	3,825,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1005	1005	975	980	53,230
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.65	3.8	4,551,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2050	2050	1990	2005	93,560
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Ionics Inc.	2	2	1.9	1.9	350,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.043	0.043	0.043	0.043	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	1,800,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.22	1.22	40,000
Philweb Corp.	0.032	0.032	0.031	0.031	321,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	170,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14	14.25	14	14.25	703,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.55	4.55	1,051,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.38	1.38	725,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	200,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople, Inc.	3.05	3.05	3	3	144,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.22	2.22	2.16	2.16	268,000
Paxys Inc.	11	11	10.5	10.5	1,148,100
MINING & OIL					
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	4.25	4.3	4	4.1	2,373,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	4.3	4.35	4.05	4.1	991,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	30,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7.9	7.9	7.7	7.7	585,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.29	0.27	0.28	26,430,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.32	0.32	0.3	0.3	25,190,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.028	0.029	0.027	0.028	251,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.03	366,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	171,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.25	4.25	4.05	4.15	3,955,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.25	4.3	4.1	4.25	5,570,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27	27	26.5	26.5	18,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.48	0.5	0.46	0.5	1,780,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	19,200,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	12,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.24	490,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.26	760,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.25	16.25	16.25	16.25	179,500
PREFERRED					
Ayala Corp. Pref. B	101	101	101	101	20,000
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	307,400

DISCLOSURES

ANSCOR Consolidated Corp., a 100-percent owned subsidiary of A. Soriano Corp. (Anscor), bought the other day 50,000 shares of the latter at P1.84 per share. It now owns 908,042,259 Anscor shares.

* * *

DMCI Holdings Inc. disclosed that it had 5,880 total outstanding preferred shares as of July 31.

* * *

NEWLY elected directors of **Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.** are Gerardo Lanuza Jr., Juan Antonio Lanoza, Antonio Olbes, Walter Brown, Annabelle Brown, Amador Bacani, Miguel Ortigas Jr., Mariano Ereso Jr., Ramon Cuervo III, Manuel Orros and Eduardo Gaspar. ***Compiled by Cyril L. Bonabente, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

August 2, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.779423	1.000000	51.5750
Japan	Yen	0.006806	0.008732	0.4504
United Kingdom	Pound	1.462822	1.876800	96.7960
Hongkong	Dollar	0.100286	0.128667	6.6360
Switzerland	Franc	0.635952	0.815927	42.0814
Canada	Dollar	0.689511	0.884643	45.6255
Singapore	Dollar	0.493806	0.633553	32.6755
Australia	Dollar	0.594163	0.762311	39.3162
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.067600	2.652731	136.8146
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.207818	0.266631	13.7515
Brunei	Dollar	0.492246	0.631552	32.5723
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000086	0.000110	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020554	0.026371	1.3601
UAE	Dirham	0.212215	0.272272	14.0424
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.283000	66.1707
Argentina	Peso	0.253884	0.325733	16.7997
Brazil	Real	0.355982	0.456725	23.5556
Denmark	Kroner	0.134034	0.171966	8.8691
India	Rupee	0.016758	0.021501	1.1089
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212377	0.272480	14.0532
Mexico	New Peso	0.070747	0.090769	4.6814
New Zealand	Dollar	0.481214	0.617398	31.8423
Norway	Kroner	0.127054	0.163010	8.4072
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012937	0.016598	0.8560
South Africa	Rand	0.111970	0.143658	7.4092
Korea	Won	0.000815	0.001046	0.0539
Sweden	Kroner	0.108690	0.139449	7.1921
Syria	Pound	0.015015	0.019264	0.9935
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023752	0.030474	1.5717

No more chance for YNN after Aug. 6

With only 3 days to go, PSALM has yet to hear from the firm again, says official

By Abigail L. Ho

YNN PACIFIC CONSORTIUM INC., the highest bidder for the 600-megawatt (MW) Masinloc coal-fired power plant, can no longer stake its claim over the power generation facility if would fail to remit the required $227-million down payment by Aug. 6, said Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) president Nieves Osorio.

Osorio said there would be no more extension for YNN.

"Our relationship with YNN will cease upon the effectivity of the termination notice on Aug. 6," she said. "This means that even if YNN would request for more leeway, which it has not, PSALM is no longer in a position to entertain such a petition."

PSALM last month issued the notice of termination of its contract with YNN, in accordance with the provisions of their asset purchase agreement (APA).

According to the APA, if YNN can remit the $227 million in down payment for the plant on or before Aug. 6, its deal with PSALM as the winning bidder for the plant will be kept alive.

With only three days left before the Aug. 6, PSALM has yet to hear from YNN.

"There is no indication at the moment that YNN can come up with the upfront payment," Osorio said.

Talks between YNN and the Lopez-led Manila Electric Co. for a power supply agreement had likewise ceased when the consortium failed to meet the June 30 deadline for the remittance of the down payment, and had not resumed since.

To recall, Malaysian conglomerate Ranhill Berhad made a power supply contract with Meralco a primary condition to its infusion of fresh equity into YNN.

Several weeks of negotiations between YNN and Meralco proved futile, however, leading to the non-remittance of the down payment.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla had said that the Masinloc plant would likely be auctioned off again if YNN would miss its last chance to make the down payment on Aug. 6.

"We'll still have to assess if it would be advantageous to rebid it, considering that the plant still has no attached power supply contract," he said.

Osorio said, "As the Masinloc experience has shown, bankers are putting great importance on the power sales contracts with Meralco. At this point, we will have to assess our options as we do not intend to sell Napocor's plants at bargain prices."

Honda top SUV seller in US launched in RP

By Ronnel W. Domingo

HONDA CARS PHILIPPINES INC. YESTERDAY introduced in the local market the Pilot full-sized sport utility vehicle which, company officials said, was the brand's top seller in the United States.

This is the first time this model will be made available in Asia.

HCPI president and general manager Takeshi Sekiguchi said the Pilot, of which half a million units have been sold in the US since it was launched there in 2002, was expected to "usher in a new level of boldness in the (Philippine) SUV market."

"Because of the Pilot's distinguished overall value and leadership stance in the American automobile industry, HCPI now takes the initiative to bring to the Philippines the 2006 Pilot," Sekiguchi said.

The official said the Pilot comes with a 3.5-liter, 24-valve, six-cylinder engine and is equipped with the Variable Torque Management 4-Wheel Drive or VTM-4 System that combines the all-wheel drive and four-wheel drive features.

With the VTM-4, power is distributed proportionally between the front and rear wheels during acceleration to make the vehicle an all-wheel drive.

When cruising, torque is cut to the rear wheel "for best fuel economy-delivering the best 'on demand' four-wheel drive."

Data from the US Environment Protection Agency show that the Pilot runs 17 miles to a gallon in city driving and 22 mpg in the highway. This translates to about 7.2 kilometers to a liter and 9.3 kpl, respectively.

Sekiguchi said buyers could start making reservation for the Pilot starting today at an introductory price of P2.6 million. The units, however, will be available starting November.

HCPI also launched the 2006 Accord luxury sedan which comes in 2.4-liter and 3-liter variants.

The new Accord is priced at P1.47 million for the 2.4-liter engine and P1.69 million for the 3-liter variant. Buyers of the bigger model can get it in the special Brilliant White Pearl color for P15,000 more.

Also yesterday, HCPI opened the five-day exhibit dubbed Honda World 2006 at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati City.

SE Asia steps up biofuel drive

SINGAPORE—SOUTHEAST ASIAN countries are racing ahead with plans to put a lid on oil demand by boosting domestic biofuels, a sign that record prices are spurring the substitution that Opec producers fear will lead to oversupply.

The rush to turn crops into transport fuels has picked up as the cost of oil has more than tripled since 2002, but only in the past year have Asian countries joined Europe in setting targets for biofuel consumption.

This is also politically easier than measures to rein in growing demand through unpopular retail fuel price hikes, or capital intensive longer-term measures to enhance energy security.

But there are still plenty of constrains that could delay or halt biofuel development, analysts say.

A Thai official said this week that Bangkok hoped to replace over a quarter of its oil demand by 2020 through vehicles using ethanol-blended gasoline or natural gas, while Opec-member Indonesia this month set a target to use 10 percent biofuels for its more than 1 million barrels of daily consumption by 2010.

"We believe we can do more than that—we are not dreaming," Indonesia's energy minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro said.

For the plan to work, Indonesia will need to find 6 million hectares (15 million acres) for plantations of cassava, sugarcane, jatropha and palm oil. Indonesia and Malaysia last week pledged to use 40 percent of their palm oil crops for biofuels.

Malaysia, the world's top producer of palm oil, is due to start selling a 5-percent palm oil-diesel blend at domestic pumps in October and a new legislation may set out a firm target for nationwide use.

Myanmar hopes to replace all of its 40,000 barrels per day (bpd) oil import demand if it grows enough of a nut-based biofuel, while the Philippines is pushing ahead with ethanol and coconut plantations for biofuel.

Biofuels are just the kind of oil substitute that producer cartel OPEC fears will erode future demand for its crude, leading to calls for "demand road map" from consumers who want billions of dollars of investment in new capacity.

Still analysts are tempering expectations.

"They've got to find the land and there are still technical issues with biofuels. (And) if oil falls back to $40, many of these projects will be off," said Yonghun Jung, vice-president of the Asia Pacific Energy Research Centre.

"I don't think these targets are realistic—it takes a couple of years to build a biofuel plant and very few are under construction," he added.

The surge in demand for biofuels, backed by government policies and increased by top oil consumers the United States, China and Japan's push for ethanol, could also lead to the very thing governments are trying to avoid—more fuel imports.

"Biofuel is the flavor of the month... but most Asean nations are likely to be net importers over the near term," said Graham Stowell of Bronzeoak, a Philippines-based bioenergy developer, adding that the right tariffs and incentives needed to be in place to promote inter-regional trade. *Reuters*

GOINGS-ON

Human dev't report 2006

THE ASIA-PACIFIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REport 2006, dubbed as "Trade on Human Terms: Makatao pa ba?," will be presented on Aug. 17 at the Assembly Hall, National College of Public Administration in UP, Diliman, Quezon City.

Former President Fidel V. Ramos will deliver the keynote address. The event is co-organized by the UP NCPAG, School of Economics, Free Trade Alliance (FTA), the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the UNDP under the Fostering Democratic Governance (FDG) Portfolio.

The launch will be highlighted by a roundtable discussion that seeks to raise awareness on the issues and concerns related to international trade.

Road engineers' meet

TOP ROAD engineers and heads of road authorities in Asia will convene in Manila on Nov. 20 to 24 for the 12th Road Engineering Association of Asia and Australasia International Conference. With the theme "'On the Road to the Future," the conference is jointly sponsored by the Department of Public Works and Highways , the Road Engineering Association of the Philippines and the REAAA Philippine Chapter.

REAAA president Salvador A. Pleyto and Public Works Secretary Hermogenes E. Ebdane Jr. spearheaded the recent official launching of the 12th REAAA Conference at Edsa Shangri-La Hotel.

After years of deliberation, road engineers in Southeast Asia identified the need for a permanent regional body that will promote the advancement of the science and practice of road engineering and other allied professions. On June 15, 1973, 300 delegates from 10 countries attending a conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia unanimously agreed to form REAAA.

New STI deal

STI INTENSIFIES its bid to bring more Filipino professionals abroad through an agreement with majority-owned placement agency Global Resource for Outsourced Workers Inc and Edulynx Corp., which specializes in language training.

Under a Memorandum of Understanding, STI, GROW and Edulynx have committed to collaborate in the education, training and deployment of qualified professionals who would teach English to speakers of other language.

With expertise in language training, Edulynx will provide the curriculum for Tesol or Teachers of English for Speakers of Other Language. Tesol is a 60-hour intensive course which covers important areas of teaching English as a second language.

The program includes a lesson plan for reading, writing, speaking and listening activities, classroom management, internet applications and the basics of sound, fundamental teaching pedagogy. The program also provides the students an avenue to exercise their teaching skills in a closed room setting.

While STI will provide the venue and faculty for Tesol, Edulynx will provide the training and the certification for Tesol instructors.

Minding Mindanao's mining industry

MINDANAWORLD

Joji Ilagan-Bian

THE PHILIPPINE MINING INDUSTRY is one of the most promising industries in Asia. The country has vast mineral resources and its strategic location makes exports to other Asian nations easier.

Our proximity to China and India, which are the biggest markets for mineral products in Asia, makes investors from South Korea, Japan, Australia, Canada, the United States, and South Africa interested in investing in the industry.

The country is at the Circum-Pacific belt of fire where the earth's tectonic plates collide and the process of volcanism most active.

These processes of volcanism and plate convergence result in the formation of important metallic mineral deposits, such as gold, copper, iron, chromate, nickel, cobalt and platinum. Based on past production and defined resources, the Philippines is the fifth most mineralized country in the world and has established reserves of 13 known metallic and 29 non-metallic minerals. The country has 9 million hectares of mineralized land, of which only 420,000 hectares have been tapped.

Two decades ago, the local mining industry was among the top five largest mineral exporters in the world with annual export revenue of US$1.2 billion. Global ranking in mineral deposits in the 1980s placed the Philippines at the second spot in gold deposits, fourth in copper deposits, fifth in nickel deposits, and sixth in chromate deposits.

At present, the industry's export contribution has been reduced by almost 50 percent from its performance in the 1980s.

The National Economic Development Authority estimates that some US$840 billion worth of mineral wealth in the country was still untapped. Mindanao reportedly accounts for 70 percent of the national total mineral deposits. The decline in the mining exploration activities in the country has greatly affected Mindanao 's economic development.

Of the 23 major metallic projects operating in the Philippines, nine are in Mindanao (primarily in the Caraga and Davao).

According to the Mines & Geosciences Bureau, existing mining rights in Mindanao account for only 1.4 percent of the mineral areas.

The 516 tenement applications under study by the MGB, if approved, would raise the rate to 15 percent.

Exploration companies operating in Mindanao include Silangan Mindanao Exploration Co. (Tubod, Surigao del Norte), Tampakan Mineral Resources Corp. (Tampakan, South Cotabato), and Toronto Ventures Inc. (Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte). These companies are engaged in activities aimed at promoting the development of their host communities through infrastructure support and provision of livelihood.

Mining could bring considerable wealth to remote areas -- providing jobs, developing local industries, and improving physical and social infrastructure. Hence, the development of the industry can be an effective peace and development strategy in Mindanao.

Notwithstanding the presence of such companies, most of Mindanao remains untapped for its mineral potential.

Mining, social development

Agriculture and mining are the oldest industries in the world. The world could not have developed without the use of minerals and metals. The negative perception on mining arises from the old mining laws that did not provide for adequate environmental protection and social development.

Mindanao business leaders are very much aware of the significance of an active mining industry to the socio-economic development of the island. The government and the private sector have joined together to revitalize Mindanao's mineral industry.

The Mindanao business sector is pushing for responsible mining with the primary objective of maximizing environmental, economic and social benefits.

Mining remains one of the country's options to free itself from the economic deprivation and attain a better quality of life for its people. The hard reality is that we do not get most of the minerals that we need for industrialization from our own resources, instead, we import them. However, there is always a choice of producing the minerals, ourselves.

Social responsibility

Mining companies are mandated to spend at least 1 percent of their annual direct mining and milling costs for community development and the development of mining technology and geosciences. Of the amount, 90 percent should be earmarked for community development under a social development and management program (SDMP). SDMP should provide alternative livelihood opportunities for employees and their dependents, and for neighboring communities during the life of the mine.

If strictly implemented, this will greatly benefit Mindanao, in terms of infrastructure and financial resources development.

Case in point is the Silangan Mindanao Exploration Co., a joint venture between Philez Gold Philippines, Inc. and the Anglo American Exploration Philippines Inc.

While conducting exploration activities, Silangan employed over 200 people in the area and has initiated a number of community development programs. The company has played a vital role in the improvement and repair of community roads, water system, and other infrastructure support. It has contributed immensely to community health care.

There are many ways to push for the development of mining activities in Mindanao, while simultaneously protecting the environment and empowering the people living in the mining community. The proper enforcement of the mining law of 1995 is necessary. The development of effective and credible monitoring is vital in ensuring strict compliance of national standards.

(Email comments to jojibian2@yahoo.com)

EIB SAVINGS BANK, INC.

Cebu South Road, Barangay Bulacao, Talisay Cebu City

STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Branches)
As of June 30, 2006

ASSETS		AMOUNT
Cash and Cash Items	P	1,412,982
Due from Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas		949,116
Due from Other Banks		46,700,556
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)		8,460,619
Bank Premises, Furnitures, Fixtures & Equipments (Net)		2,411,094
Other Assets (Net):		
Others		10,652,551
TOTAL ASSETS	P	70,586,918
LIABILITIES		
Savings Deposits		988,013
Time Deposits		1,466,370
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits		410,306
Other Liabilities		754,856
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P	3,619,545
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS		
Capital Stock	P	50,000,000
Surplus		16,967,373
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	66,967,373
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P	70,586,918

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Benjamin P. Castillo
Chairman

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, Jr.
Director

Alfredo M. Yao
Director

PRINCIPAL OFFICER

Alex A. Pimentel
President

Other Information:	
1. Deposits of:	
a. Banks	617,979
2. Compliance with Magna Carta Law:	
Prescribed	
Ratio of Compliance	6% for Small Enterprises
Actual Compliance	26.46%
3. Amount of non-performing loans	556,221
4. Ratio of non-performing loans to total loan portfolio	3.64%
5. General provision for loan losses	76,612
6. Specific provision for loan losses	6,728,038
7. Return on equity (ROE)	0.35%

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
MAKATI CITY) S.S.

I / WE, Alex A. Pimentel and Benjamin P. Castillo of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd.) ALEX A. PIMENTEL
President

(Sgd.) BENJAMIN P. CASTILLO
Chairman

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 31st day of July , 2006, affiant exhibiting to me his/her/their Community Tax No.8784849 issued at Cebu on January 05, 2006 and Community Tax No.12099808 issued at Manila on January 02, 2006.

Doc. No. 362
Page No. 74
Book No. VII
Series of 2006

Notary Public

MEMBER OF THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORPORATION (PDIC) Maximum Insurance for each depositor P250,000

Airline firm eyes tourist service in Pangasinan

Amphibian aircraft to serve visitors of Hundred Islands

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ALAMINOS CITY—AN AIRLINE company plans to bring amphibian aircraft to this city this month to serve tourists visiting the Hundred Islands National Park.

Jerome John Valera, Aeroflite Airways vice president, said his firm was set to launch its 45-minute maiden flight from this city to Metro Manila at the end of the month.

Valera said the company would also offer charter services to fly tourists from the Hundred Islands National Park to other tourist destinations in the country.

He said the Aeroflite Airways has two amphibian 12-seater, single engine aircraft from the United States available for charter services.

He said the company was targeting high-end tourists willing to pay for the "value of convenience and comfort."

The company will use Alaminos as a starting point to bring its service closer to Filipinos.

The city government, on the other hand, will take the opportunity to introduce the islands to other tourists.

Aeroflite plans to eventually service other tourist destinations like Boracay, Subic and Clark, Valera said.

"[The service] is the first of its kind in the Philippines [that is run] by a Filipino company," he said.

Mayor Hernani Braganza said the aircraft services would be a big boost to Pangasinan tourism.

"The airplane can land in any remote island or any place where there is a 700-meter runway. It can even land on a highway. We will be opening a lot of tourism opportunities with the service," he said.

He said Alaminos has been experiencing an "unbelievable tourist influx, even during the rainy days."

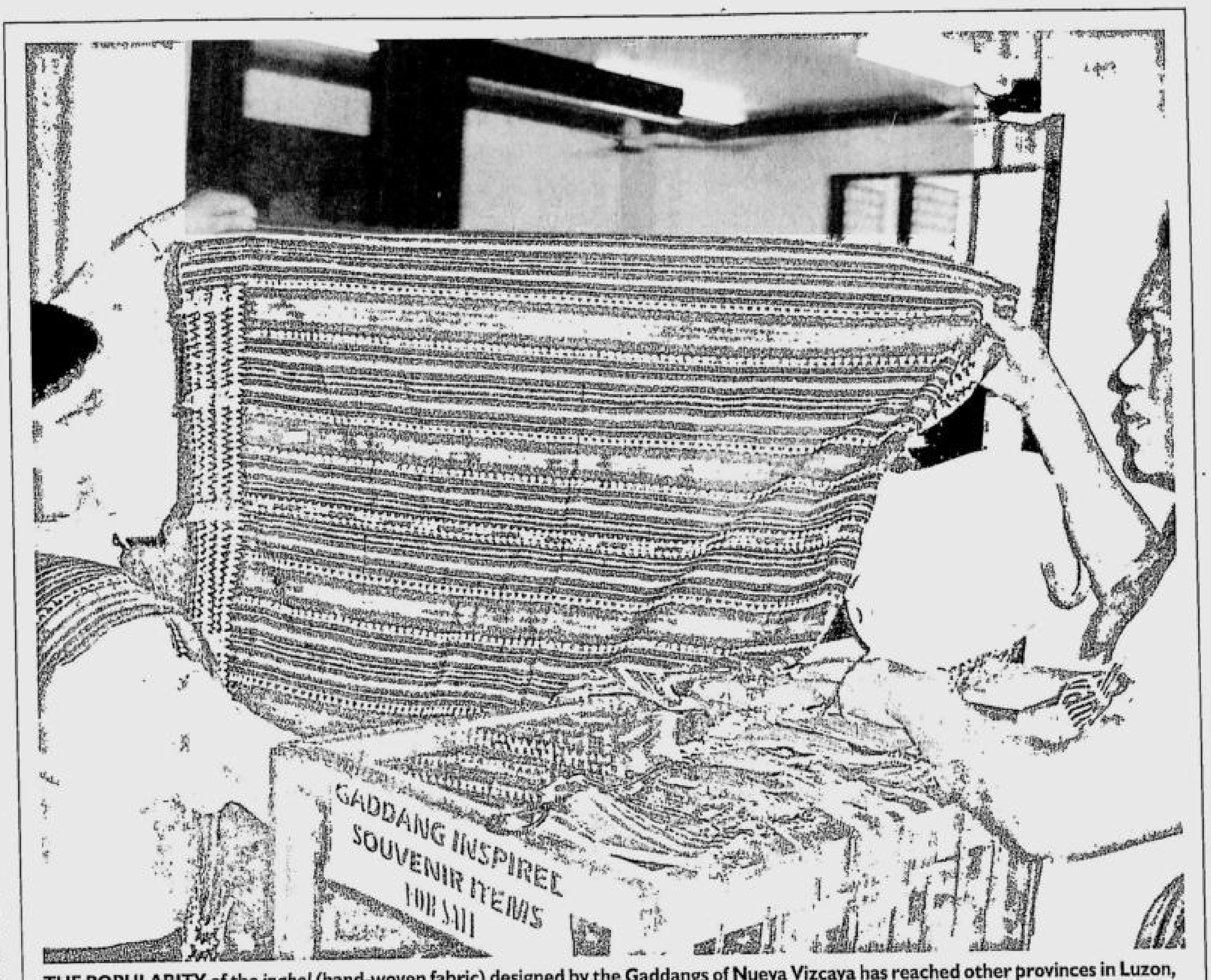
He said at least 5,000 tourists have visited the Hundred Islands from January to May.

The figure is 2,000 short of the estimated 7,000 visitors who came in 2005, he said.

The Hundred Islands National Park, the first national park in the country, is Pangasinan's best-known tourism attraction.

The park is a cluster of 123 islands and islets, which are actually overgrown corals, surrounded by sandy beaches.

The HINP has been declared a national geological monument in September 2001 by the National Committee of Geographical Sciences and can be considered as the largest marine sanctuary as all 1,844 hectares are off-limits to all kinds of fishing.



THE POPULARITY of the *inabel* (hand-woven fabric) designed by the Gaddangs of Nueva Vizcaya has reached other provinces in Luzon, including Metro Manila.
VILLAMOR VISAYA JR., PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

FOURTH BPO LOCATOR

US company to open call center in Clark

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC Zone—New York-based Sutherland Global Services has committed set up a call center here, making it the fourth business process outsourcing firm to locate in Clark.

K.S. Kumar, head of Sutherland's Asia Pacific/Europe operations and strategies division, and Victor Jose Luciano, Clark Development Corp. acting president, signed the agreement for the investment project last Monday here.

AOL, Cyber City Teleservices and Intellrisk Management Corp. were the first to locate in Clark, Luciano said.

AOL and Cyber City employ 1,150 and 2,500 agents, respectively.

Kumar said Sutherland would hire 1,200 workers for its operations at the Berthaphil Business Park.

The 20-year-old company decided to branch out here because of the country's pool of English-speaking workers, he said.

He said the soon-to-be completed Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway was another advantage to doing business here.

A company profile released by the CDC said Sutherland employs more than 12,000 workers in 14 delivery centers in the United States, Canada, India, Mexico and the Philippines.

The firm specializes in providing customized business and knowledge process outsourced solutions to more than 50 companies in the Fortune 500.

These include customer service, transaction processing, technology support, knowledge management, account management and business intelligence.

Cable cars, trams new farm-to-market roads in Cordillera, gov't says

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—IF CONGRESS sets aside money for farm-to-market roads in the Cordillera, then it will likely go to tramlines and cable car networks that President Macapagal-Arroyo wants installed in the region's vegetable-producing areas.

Due to the extensive lobbying of local farmers, the government has classified the cable car system and the tramline as the official farm-to-market road projects suited to Cordillera's vegetable industry.

This new policy was relayed to members of the Cordillera Regional Development Council during a recent meeting with undersecretaries of the departments of agrarian reform, environment and agriculture.

Juan Ngalob, Cordillera director of the National Economic and Development Authority, said it took Cordillera planners 20 years to promote an alternative transport system suited to the mountainous terrain, because the idea of installing cable cars and tramlines was previously ignored.

Ngalob said NEDA drew up an alternative transport study in 1998, but few officials considered it until recently when farmers said they preferred a faster form of transport to keep their vegetables fresh.

Ordinary road networks will not do in the Cordillera, which is characterized by "steep mountains and high elevation terrain where almost three-fourths of the land area has slopes of 30 degrees," an RDC document said.

"A substantial span of these lands are within protected areas and critical watersheds thus restricting the construction of farm-to-market roads that are eligible for funding under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program fund," it said.

Agrarian Reform Undersecretary Narciso Nieto said Malacañang accepted the RDC proposal to convert the farm-to-market allocations of the Department of Agrarian Reform into tramline projects.

Ngalob said officials agreed that tramlines and cable cars were environmentally friendly because these would not require the DPWH to carve out new roads out of the mountains.

DPWH would also avoid right-of-way conflicts from residents once it shifts from roads to cable car systems, he added.

Agusan exploring ways to revive wood industry

By Chris V. Panganiban
PDI Mindanao Bureau

SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL Sur—Officials here want to revive the province's once booming wood industry and make Agusan a timber corridor.

This time, however, they want to make sure that wood processing plants would be established to make the province a distributor of finished products rather than a major supplier of logs.

The proposal was presented last week during a business meeting with Trade and Industry Undersecretary Carissa Cruz-Villanuevar at the end of the two-day 12th Caraga Business Conference.

Edilberto Bernal, former president of Agusan del Sur Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that since mini-sawmills were no longer allowed to operate in the province, thousands have lost their jobs.

He said there was a need to allow small wood processing plants to operate anew, but with stringent measures to prevent illegal cutting and processing of logs taken from the forests.

Joey Gaviola, manager of Development Bank of the Philippines, agreed with Bernal saying that if the local wood processing industry would be allowed to operate again under close supervision, the province's economy would be given a much-needed boost.

Responding to the call, Evangelista assured local officials of her "all out support" to revive the wood processing industry.

She said she would to talk to more local and foreign investors to set up facilities in the province.

Brilgo Pagaran, regional director of the Department of Trade and Industry, told local officials that they had been receiving inquiries from Taiwanese, Singaporean and Japanese investors on the possibility of establishing wood processing plants.

Mayor Irenea Hitgano of Trento town said environment regional director Benjamin Tumaliauan had already allowed community sawmills to be set up in the province following the approval of President Arroyo last year.

During President Arroyo's visit in San Luis town last year, Hitgano presented the community sawmill proposal, under which local government units would closely monitor and supervise operations to prevent abuses.

She said the President had initially earmarked P1.4 million for the establishment of the local wood processing plant in their town, which would serve as a model for other towns.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources imposed a log ban in 1995 on grounds that mini-sawmills have contributed to rampant illegal logging activities.

But in 1998, former president Joseph Estrada tried to revive the "timber corridor" plan to address deforestation.

But the plan to establish a tree plantation covering 600,000 to 800,000 hectares was never realized.

Koreans are coming to RP see the sights, learn English

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
PDI Visayas Bureau

ENGLISH
schools

CEBU CITY—KOREANS FIRST came to Cebu as tourists.

Now many of them, mostly in their 20s, are coming to see the sights and learn conversational English at the same time.

The English training institutions catering to Koreans and Japanese in Cebu now number over 30.

Most of these offer English programs in a formal setting, while others teach students either in groups or one-on-one tutorials.

The Cebu Pacific International Language Services (CePILS), the biggest in Cebu, accommodates up to 400 students at a time, according to Grace Barbon, the school's academic director.

The school started as a small operation in 2001. Today, it rents the building that used to house the Cebu Harbour View Hotel.

"CePILS has grown bigger. When we started, we had very few classrooms. Now we have lots of classes, especially during peak seasons from June to August and December to February, which are vacation time in Korea and Japan," Barbon said.

The institute's English programs run for one month to six months, she said.

She also noted that the demand for language schools was growing and this has encouraged more schools to open.

CePILS itself plans to expand to accommodate the growing number of students, Barbon said.

The CePILS students are housed in the former hotel rooms of the building and in another hotel outside the school, she said.

Nida G. Malabanjot, general manager of MTM Language Institute Philippines, also noted the increasing demand for English training institutes.

"We started with four rooms for group classes and nine rooms for one-to-one tutorials. We used to rent a big house in a high-end subdivision for the students' dormitory. Now, we are renting two and a half floors at Hotel La Nivel," Malabanjot said.

The institute, which started in early 2002, uses the hotel's 36 hotel rooms as dormitory rooms while the function rooms have been transformed into classrooms.

It now has one classroom for a maximum of eight students, eight for a maximum of four students and 44 for one-on-one tutorials. It can accommodate 100 students.

"The Philippines is getting to be popular among Koreans in terms of quality education," she said.

Koreans also feel comfortable here because English is widely spoken, she added.

Aside from this, Malabanjot said the cost (which includes tuition and living expenses) of learning English is lower in the Philippines than in Canada, United States and Europe.

The package, which is arranged in Korea, includes tuition for a three- to four-month program, accommodation, food and laundry, she added.

According to Malabanjot, the teachers, mostly English majors, prefer staying with institutions like MTM because they only deal with a limited number of students, and classes are held in air-conditioned rooms.

While the students spend eight hours from Monday to Friday learning English, she said, they go around Cebu during the weekends.

"They have gone to places I have not been to. They have gone as far as Malapasqua Island and Bantayan Island up north, and Moalboal down south," Malabanjot said.

The number of foreigners coming to the Philippines to learn English was expected to increase even further with the thrust of Department of Tourism to promote its "English as a second language Tour Program."

The program enables foreign students to study English through interaction, practice and use of English in real-life settings through games, outdoor activities, excursions and immersions.

The participants of the ESL tour program also get to see the countryside and learn the local culture.

Mariflor Liwanag, provincial director of the Technical Educational Skills Development Authority (TESDA), said four language training centers have registered with the agency since the latter enforced the memorandum of agreement with the DOT.

Under the MOA, English training centers catering to foreign students need to register with TESDA, which will then assess whether the facilities and the training program comply with the minimum standards, Liwanag said.

She cited the importance of the audit conducted by TESDA and an external English language consultant as it would ensure that the quality of the training meets the required standards.

Oil exceeds $75 on hurricanes, falling inventory

SINGAPORE—OIL EDGED HIGHER on Wednesday as a storm was forecast to head for the cluster of oil production rigs in the Gulf of Mexico this week and gasoline stocks in the United States were expected to fall.

Continued fighting between Israel and Hezbollah, a bomb blast on Iraq's oil infrastructure in Turkey and Iran's nuclear standoff with the West added to the bullish sentiment.

US light, sweet crude for September delivery rose 35 cents to $75.26 a barrel by 0715 GMT, rising for a third session and extending Tuesday's 51-cent gain. London ICE Brent crude rose 39 cents to $76.28 a barrel.

Analysts said prices would be driven more by fundamentals that could trigger supply disruptions such as the looming hurricane season and falling US inventory levels than political tensions in the next one to two months.

"There are many bullish factors now. But I believe the hurricanes and US stock levels will have more impact than the issues going on in the Middle East," said Tetsu Emori, chief commodities strategist with Mitsui Bussan Futures in Tokyo.

"The impact of the political situation is more psychological. For example, I don't think Iran will stop exporting oil, simply because they need the money. They are not crazy, I hope." Tropical Storm Chris, the third named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, brushed the Caribbean's northern Leeward Islands on Wednesday and could become the year's first hurricane bound for the Gulf of Mexico this week, US forecasters said.

US stockdraw seen

The Miami-based National Hurricane Center said Chris was set to strengthen and could become a hurricane later on Wednesday as it moved on a track that could take it into the Gulf of Mexico, where it could damage US oil and gas facilities.

US gasoline stocks are forecast to have fallen by 1.6 million barrels to 211 million barrels for the week ended July 28, having consistently fallen over the past three weeks, a Reuters survey showed.

Crude stocks are expected to have dropped by 700,000 barrels but distillates, which include heating oil and diesel, are set to show another build, by about 700,000 barrels. The US oil stock data are due at 1430 GMT.

In the Middle East, Israeli commandos snatched five suspected Hezbollah militants deep inside Lebanon on Wednesday, in a raid Lebanese security sources said killed at least 19 civilians as Israel sought to maximise the damage to Hezbollah before diplomatic efforts can bring about an end to the war.

US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said a ceasefire could be reached within days and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert also saw movement towards a ceasefire now that Hezbollah had suffered what he said were heavy losses.

"We are at the beginning of a political process that in the end will bring a ceasefire under entirely different conditions than before," said Olmert, without giving any immediate time-frame.

Adding to worries over supplies, an Iraqi pipeline carrying crude from the country's northern oilfields to Turkey's Ceyhan port was bombed, pushing back the planned restart of exports along the route.

Concerns over Iran persisted as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad insisted on the country's right to produce nuclear fuel, despite a United Nations resolution demanding that Tehran suspend its nuclear activities by Aug. 31 or face the threat of sanctions.

And in Russia, daily oil production inched down in July to 9.68 million barrels after reaching a post-Soviet high of 9.69 million barrels in June, Energy Ministry data showed. *Reuters*

PEDESTRIANS walk past a billboard showing a view of Beijing's Forbidden City, one of a few remaining ancient structures still intact in the Chinese capital, which is undergoing tremendous urban redevelopment ahead of the 2008 summer Olympic Games. China's steel industry wants tighter controls on foreign investment, state media said, amid growing concerns a more protectionist mood may be taking hold in Asia's second-largest economy. AFP

Asian stocks slightly up despite jitters

SINGAPORE—ASIAN STOCKS clawed back early losses on Wednesday but remained wary of a possible US rate rise next week, although the dollar stayed weak as forex traders remained skeptical that the Federal Reserve will act.

Australia's central bank raised its key interest rate to 6 percent as expected—its highest level in more than five years—and markets braced for further tightening this year.

Oil climbed half a dollar to around $75.40 a barrel.

Along with the dollar's weakness, firmer oil helped lift gold to two-week highs near $650 an ounce.

Tokyo's benchmark Nikkei average ended up 0.15 percent at 15,464.29, having fallen as much as 1 percent in morning trade, while MSCI's index of non-Japan Asian shares was flat early yesterday afternoon.

"There are still some worries about higher US interest rates," said Takashi Ushio, head of the investment strategy division at Marusan Securities. "But this is very much a market where investors are searching for bargains."

Core US consumer prices rose an annual 2.4 percent in June, the biggest rise in nearly four years, keeping equity markets on edge that the Fed might raise rates at next Tuesday's meeting.

That helped knock US stocks lower, with the Dow Jones industrial average falling 0.54 percent and the Nasdaq Composite Index losing 1.41 percent on Tuesday.

"Most people had believed the Fed would not raise interest rates in August, but yesterday's data erased those hopes," said Cho Seong-joon, an analyst at Meritz Securities in Seoul.

"Before the Fed meeting we are going to see a lot of confusion."

But while equity markets readied for a US rate rise, forex markets were yet to be convinced.

The dollar stayed near a 3-week low against the yen and at a near-one-month low on the euro.

Australian shares fell 1 percent as banks and retailers retreated on the prospects of further local interest rate rises, while the Australian dollar strengthened to $0.7670 from $0.7650 just before the policy tightening was announced.

In Tokyo, shares of Chugai Pharmaceutical Co. Ltd. and other firms seen as solid earners gained, while some tech firms and other exporters fell due to concerns about higher US-interest rates.

Shares in small-cap indexes booked bigger gains as investors shifted funds into shares of start-ups and other companies seen as undervalued after steep falls this year.

Elsewhere in Asia, shares recovered from earlier losses, although sentiment remained cautious.

Hong Kong stocks rose 0.75 percent in morning trade as investors bid up Bank of East Asia shares ahead of the lender's earnings report on Friday.

"People are still finding reasons to buy Hong Kong stocks, but institutional money is still on the sidelines, if you look at the volume," said Kent Yau, deputy research director at Core Pacific-Yamaichi (International).

South Korean shares ended up 0.6 percent as hopes for better earnings at technology companies offset a fall in shares of SK Telecom Co. and its peers.

A weaker won currency also helped exporters.

Taiwan stocks finished up 0.5 percent, having fallen for the past two sessions, with technology shares like AU Optronics leading the way.

Japanese government bond prices rose after a Bank of Japan board member said interest rates would rise gradually, bolstering expectations that a future climb in bond yields would be limited. *Reuters*

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Lot 2	Blk 36	LA 505 sqm	P1,818,000.00
Lot 4	Blk 36	LA 486 sqm	P1,749,600.00
Lot 5	Blk 36	LA 486 sqm	P1,749,600.00
Lot 31	Blk 22	LA 563 sqm	P2,026,800.00

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Lot 105	Blk 1	LA 614 sqm	P2,149,000.00
Lot 106	Blk 1	LA 367 sqm	P1,285,000.00
Lot 107	Blk 1	LA 431 sqm	P1,509,000.00
Lot 110	Blk 1	LA 405 sqm	P1,418,000.00
Lot 111	Blk 1	LA 398 sqm	P1,393,000.00
Lot 38	Blk 16	LA 823 sqm	P2,881,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 17	LA 556 sqm	P1,946,000.00
Lot 10	Blk 30	LA 362 sqm	P1,267,000.00
Lot 12	Blk 30	LA 389 sqm	P1,362,000.00
Lot 17	Blk 30	LA 328 sqm	P1,148,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 32	LA 366 sqm	P1,281,000.00
Lot 46	Blk 32	LA 322 sqm	P1,127,000.00
Lot 18	Blk 33	LA 476 sqm	P1,666,000.00
Lot 12	Blk 34	LA 319 sqm	P1,117,000.00
Lot 4	Blk 35	LA 351 sqm	P1,229,000.00
Lot 16	Blk 35	LA 315 sqm	P1,103,000.00
Lot 18	Blk 35	LA 320 sqm	P1,120,000.00
Lot 21	Blk 35	LA 318 sqm	P1,113,000.00
Lot 22	Blk 35	LA 322 sqm	P1,127,000.00
Lot 24	Blk 35	LA 327 sqm	P1,145,000.00
Lot 31	Blk 36	LA 329 sqm	P1,152,000.00
Lot 18	Blk 37	LA 376 sqm	P1,316,000.00
Lot 45	Blk 63	LA 363 sqm	P1,271,000.00
Lot 33	Blk 64	LA 593 sqm	P2,076,000.00
Lot 17	Blk 67	LA 352 sqm	P1,232,000.00
Lot 15	Blk 75	LA 746 sqm	P2,760,000.00
Lot 49	Blk 82	LA 405 sqm	P1,418,000.00
Lot 2	Blk 87	LA 670 sqm	P2,345,000.00
Lot 19	Blk 88	LA 340 sqm	P1,190,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 96	LA 723 sqm	P2,531,000.00
Lot 14	Blk 98	LA 568 sqm	P1,998,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 99	LA 412 sqm	P1,442,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 99	LA 412 sqm	P1,442,000.00
Lot 3	Blk 100	LA 277 sqm	P 970,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 100	LA 312 sqm	P1,092,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 100	LA 314 sqm	P1,099,000.00
Lot15	Blk 104	LA 343 sqm	P1,201,000.00
Lot 33	Blk 106	LA 501 sqm	P1,754,000.00
Lot 35	Blk 106	LA 563 sqm	P1,971,000.00
Lot 37	Blk 106	LA 507 sqm	P1,775,000.00
Lot 42	Blk 106	LA 439 sqm	P1,537,000.00
Lot 43	Blk 106	LA 422 sqm	P1,477,000.00
Lot 51	Blk 106	LA 515 sqm	P1,803,000.00
Lot 11	Blk 108	LA 294 sqm	P1,029,000.00
Lot 19	Blk 109	LA 317 sqm	P1,110,000.00
Lot 21	Blk 109	LA 317 sqm	P1,110,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 109	LA 309 sqm	P1,082,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 109	LA 317 sqm	P1,110,000.00
Lot 13	Blk 109	LA 317 sqm	P1,110,000.00
Lot 23	Blk 110	LA 312 sqm	P1,092,000.00
Lot 1	Blk 110	LA 411 sqm	P1,439,000.00
Lot 2	Blk 112	LA 355 sqm	P1,243,000.00
Lot 16	Blk 112	LA 496 sqm	P1,736,000.00
Lot 12	Blk 115	LA 362 sqm	P1,267,000.00
Lot 2	Blk 116	LA 545 sqm	P2,017,000.00
Lot 22	Blk118	LA 980 sqm	P3,430,000.00
Lot 25	Blk 119	LA 448 sqm	P1,568,000.00
Lot 26	Blk 119	LA 445 sqm	P1,558,000.00
Lot 42	Blk 119	LA 355 sqm	P1,136,000.00

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Talomo, Davao Del Sur

Lot 4	Blk 1	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 1	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 1	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 2	Blk 2	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 2	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 18	Blk 2	LA 450 sqm	P1,710,000.00
Lot 2	Blk 3	LA 415 sqm	P1,577,000.00
Lot 3	Blk 3	LA 416 sqm	P1,581,000.00
Lot 4	Blk 3	LA 403 sqm	P1,531,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 3	LA 359 sqm	P1,364,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 3	LA 335 sqm	P1,273,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 3	LA 312 sqm	P1,186,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 3	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 10	Blk 3	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 11	Blk 3	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 12	Blk 3	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 13	Blk 3	LA 299 sqm	P1,136,000.00
Lot 14	Blk 3	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 15	Blk 3	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 1	Blk 4	LA 105 sqm	P 294,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 10	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 11	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 12	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 13	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 14	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 15	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 16	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 17	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 18	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 19	Blk 4	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 20	Blk 4	LA 392 sqm	P1,490,000.00
Lot 21	Blk 4	LA 398 sqm	P1,512,000.00
Lot 22	Blk 4	LA 395 sqm	P1,501,000.00
Lot 4	Blk 8	LA 520 sqm	P2,184,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 8	LA 579 sqm	P2,432,000.00
Lot 3	Blk 9	LA 500 sqm	P2,000,000.00
Lot 4	Blk 9	LA 500 sqm	P2,000,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 9	LA 500 sqm	P2,000,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 9	LA 500 sqm	P2,000,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 9	LA 500 sqm	P2,000,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 9	LA 500 sqm	P2,000,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 9	LA 599 sqm	P2,396,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 10	LA 650 sqm	P2,730,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 10	LA 500 sqm	P2,100,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 10	LA 524 sqm	P2,201,000.00
Lot 10	Blk 10	LA 600 sqm	P2,520,000.00
Lot 11	Blk 10	LA 600 sqm	P2,520,000.00
Lot 10	Blk 12	LA 524 sqm	P2,201,000.00
Lot 10	Blk 16	LA 650 sqm	P2,730,000.00
Lot 20	Blk 10	LA 500 sqm	P2,100,000.00
Lot 21	Blk 10	LA 500 sqm	P2,100,000.00
Lot 44	Blk 11	LA 240 sqm	P 912,000.00
Lot 57	Blk 11	LA 240 sqm	P 912,000.00
Lot 73	Blk 11	LA 251 sqm	P 954,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 12	LA 446 sqm	P1,695,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 12	LA 428 sqm	P1,626,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 12	LA 240 sqm	P 912,000.00
Lot 42	Blk 12	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 19	LA 240 sqm	P 912,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 19	LA 240 sqm	P 912,000.00
Lot 3	Blk 1	LA 300 sqm	P1,140,000.00

St. Joseph Homes Subdivision

ONLY AT P1,100/sqm

Toril, Davao Del Sur

Lot 4	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 16	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 25	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 62	Blk 1	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 63	Blk 1	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 66	Blk 1	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 67	Blk 1	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 70	Blk 1	LA 110 sqm	P 121,000.00
Lot 74	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 75	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,000.00
Lot 78	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 79	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 82	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 83	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 91	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 94	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 96	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 97	Blk 1	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 14	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 15	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 17	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 18	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 22	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 60,000.00
Lot 23	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 25	Blk 2	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 5	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 6	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 7	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 8	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 13	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 14	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 15	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 16	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 21	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 22	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 23	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 24	Blk 3	LA 60 sqm	P 66,000.00
Lot 9	Blk 4	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 11	Blk 4	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 19	Blk 4	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00
Lot 30	Blk 4	LA 66 sqm	P 72,600.00

METRO MANILA

CALOOCAN

Prop. 1 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 650 sqm FA 564 sqm
Lot 5 Blk 48-D # 86 & 88-A , A. del Mundo St., Grace Park,
Minimun Bid Price: P 8,109,000.00

MANILA

Res'l. Condo, Golesco Regency Twin Towers, 1127 Concepcion St., Ermita

Prop. 2 - Unit 2104, 21/F A 210 sqm (w/ 1 parking slot)
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,362,000.00

Prop. 3 - Unit 2203, 22/F FA 210 sqm (w/ 1 parking slot)
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,355,000.00

Prop. 4 - Unit 2204, 22/F FA 210 sqm (w/ 1 parking slot)
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,372,000.00

Prop. 5 - Unit 2303, 23/F FA 210 sqm (w/ 1 parking slot)
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,355,000.00

MAKATI CITY

Prop. 6 - Comm'l. Condo FA 401 sqm
Unit 1-A (G/F) Biltmore Condo., # 102 Aguirre St, Legaspi Vill. (w/ 4 parking slots)
Minimum Bid Price: P 35,360,000.00

Comm'l. Condo, 88 Corp. Valero cor. Sedeno Sts., Salcedo Village

Prop. 7 - Unit 2801 FA 201.90 sqm (w/ 2 parking slots)
Minimum Bid Price: P 9,083,000.00

Prop. 8 - Unit 2804 FA 201.90 sqm (w/ 2 parking slots)
Minimum Bid Price: P 9,083,000.00

Comm'l. Condo 3rd Flr. Valero Plaza (Cityland Condo. IV) No. 124 Valero St., Salcedo Village

Prop. 9 – Unit 339 FA 30.88 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,235,000.00

Prop. 10 – Unit 340 FA 30.88 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,235,000.00

Prop. 11 – Unit 341 FA 30.88 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,235,000.00

Prop. 12 – Unit 342 FA 31.02 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,241,000.00

Prop. 13 Unit 343 FA 29.76 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,190,000.00

Prop. 14 – Unit 344 FA 29.76 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,190,000.00

Prop. 15 – Unit 345 FA 31.02 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,241,000.00

Prop. 16 –Comm'l Lot w/ Improvement.
LA 633 sqm FA 442 sqm
1765 & 1767 Garcia St., (Reposo St.) San Miguel Village
Minimum Bid Price: P 18,160,000.00

Prop. 17 - Comm'l. Lot
LA 12,322 sqm
2248 Chino Roces Ave., (Pasong Tamo Ext. , Kayamanan B
Minimum Bid Price:P512,110,000.00

Prop. 18 – Res'l. Condo FA 211 sqm
Lo1 Blk 2 Unit 201 Makati Prime City. St. Paul St , San Antonio
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,320,000.00

Prop. 19– Comm'l Lot w/ Improvement
LA 484 sqm FA 825 sqm
#2122 Chino Roces Ave, (formerly Pasong Tamo) Brgy. Pio del Pilar, Kayamanan A
Minimum Bid Price: P 26,435,000.00

PARAÑAQUE CITY

Prop. 20 – Res'l Lot LA572 sqm
L2 Abalone St.JalevilleSubd.SanDionisio.
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,690,000.00

Prop. 21 - Res'l. Condo FA 158 sqm
9th Flr. Chateau de Baie Condo, Roxas Boulevard cor. Airport Road, Baclaran, (w/ 1 parking slot)
Minimun Bid Price: P 3,220,000.00

PASIG CITY

Prop. 22 - Comm'l. Lot LA 922 sqm
Lot 16 Blk 5 San Miguel Ave. & Amethyst St., Ortigas Center, Brgy. San Antonio
Minimum Bid Price:P122,626,000.00

QUEZON CITY

Prop. 23 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 14.30sqmFA 18sqm
5-A Alvarez St., Project 4
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,788,000.00

Prop. 24 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 3,375 sqm
18 Samar St., South Triangle
Minimum Bid Price: P 54,000,000.00

Prop. 25 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 684 sqm FA 800 sqm
25 Kingsville St., White Plains Subd.
Minimum Bid Price: P 18,072,000.00

Prop. 26 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 160 sqm FA 196 sqm
Lot 9 & 11 Blk 4 Jade St., Silverland Subd., Tandang Sora
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,616,000.00

Prop. 27- Residential Lot LA 168sqm
Lot 4-A-1 # 8 J. P. Rizal St., Manlag
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,016,000.00

METRO MANILA

QUEZON CITY

Prop. 28 - Res'l Lot LA 532 sqm
Lot 4-A-2 # 8 J. P. Rizal St., Manlag
Minimum Bid Price: P 6,384,000.00

Prop. 29 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 274 sqm
#18 Batangas St, San Francisco del Monte
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,288,000.00

Prop. 30 - Res'l Lot LA 154 sqm
Lot B Matulum St., Brgy. Maharlika , Sta. Mesa Heights
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,340,000.00

Prop. 31 - Comm'l. / Indus'l. Lot
LA 2,401 sqm
114 Gen. Luis St., Brgy. Nagkaisang Nayon, Novaliches
Minimum Bid Price: P 16,928,000.00

RIZAL

Prop. 32 – Res'l Lot LA 834 sqm
Lot 5 Blk 2 Salford St., Town & Country Estates, Brgy. Dela Paz, Antipolo City
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,282,400.00

SAN JUAN

Prop. 33 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 255 sqm FA 365 sqm
26 A. Bonifacio St. Brgy. Kabayanan
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,393,000.00

Prop. 34 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 60 sqm FA 86 sqm
22 B-1 U8 Metrohomes Executive Townhomes, F. Benitez St.
Minimun Bid Price: P 1,306,000.00

Prop. 35 – Comm'l Lot LA 352 sqm
Lot 3-A-1 A. Mendoza St., (formerly Paraiso St.)
Minimun Bid Price: P 5,315,000.00

LUZON

BATAAN

Prop. 36 - Agri. Lot LA 269,348 sqm
Lot 219 Brgy. Balon-Anito, Mariveles
Minimum Bid Price: P 14,544,000.00

CAMARINES SUR

Prop. 37 - Res'l. Lot w/ improvement
LA 600 sqm FA 660 sqm
L14 & 15 Blk 3 Soriano St., Villa Sorabella Subd., Concepcion Grande, Naga City
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,103,000.00

CAVITE

Prop. 38 - Comm'l. Lot LA 2,105 sqm
Lot 1-B Molino Rd cor. Macaria Ave.Bacoor
Minimum Bid Price: P 18,793,000.00

LAGUNA

Prop. 39 – Res'l. Lot LA 210 sqm
Lot 7 Blk 5 Molave cor. Yakal Sts., Cardil Village, San Pablo City
Minimum Bid Price: P 430,670.00

Prop. 40 – Res'l. Lot LA 223 sqm
Lot 9 Blk 5 Molave cor. Yakal Sts., Cardil Village. San Pablo City
Minimum Bid Price: P 457,330.00

Prop. 41 – Comm'l. Lot LA 1,039 sqm Lot 8061-D Maharlika Highway, Brgy. San Francisco, San Pablo City
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,195,000.00

Prop. 42 – Comm'l. Lot LA 1,039 sqm
Lot 8061-E Maharlika Highway, Brgy. San Francisco, San Pablo City
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,195,000.00

OCCIDENTAL MINDORO

Prop. 43 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 440 sqm
Lot 2 Blk 4 Brgy. Mangarin, San Jose
Minimum Bid Price: P 130,000.00

QUEZON PROVINCE

Prop. 44 – Res'l. Lot LA 8,477 sqm
Lot 1182-C Along Diversion Road, Brgy. Isabang, Tayabas
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,148,853.00

Prop. 45 – Res 'l Lot LA 8,652 sqm
Lot 1183 Along Diversion Road, Brgy. Isabang, Tayabas
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,255,147.00

Prop. 46 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 75 sqm FA 47 sqm
Lot 3-H-1 Rosemarie Compound, Brgy Cotta, Lucena City
Minimum Bid Price: P 180,000.00

Prop. 47 – Res'l. Lot LA 180 sqm
L1B2 Brgy.Gulang-gulang.LucenaCity
Minimum Bid Price: P 484,524.85

Prop. 48 – Res'l. Lot LA 250 sqm
Lot17 Blk3 Brgy.Gulang- gulang, Lucena City
Minimum Bid Price: P 387,619.88

Prop. 49 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 480 sqm FA 592 sqm
Lot 2 & 3 Blk 11 Purok Matahimik, Brgy. Cotta, Lucena City
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,881,000.00

LUZON

QUEZON

Prop. 50 – Comm'l. Lot LA 5,074 sqm
Lots 2305-B & 2306-A-1-F, Quezon Ave., Brgy 8, Lucena City
Minimum Bid Price: P 14,685,000.00

TARLAC

Prop. 51 – Ind'l. Lot LA 14,432 sqm
Lot 1-B Romulo Highway, Brgy. San Juan de Mata & Dolores
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,348,000.00

Prop. 52 – Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 712 sqm FA 637 sqm
114 Rose St., Villa Soliman Subd., Brgy Salapungan
Minimum Bid Price: P 2,543,400.00

VISAYAS

AKLAN

Prop. 53 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 1,518 sqm FA 460 sqm
Lot 2 Cepriano St., Brgy. Estancia, Municipality of Kalibo
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,060,000.00

Prop. 54 - Residential Lot LA 470sqm
Lot 3435-E Along Road-right -of-way, Brgy. Tigayon, Kalibo
Minimum Bid Price: P 198,000.00

Prop. 55-Agro-Res'l Lot LA 4,668sqm
L3776 Interior of Brgy. Caticlan, Malay
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,156,000.00

Prop. 56-Residential Lot LA6,058sqm
Lot 3604-B-2-B Along National Road & Brgy. Road, Brgy. Caticlan, Malay
Minimum Bid Price: P 10,845,000.00

Prop. 57 - Res'l. Lot LA 271 sqm
L10 Blk5 MercedesVill BrgyNewBuswang
Minimum Bid Price: P 271 ,000.00

Prop. 58 - Res'l. Lot LA 277sqm
L11 Blk5 MercedesVill.BrgyNewBuswang
Minimum Bid Price: P 277,000.00

CAPIZ

Prop. 59–Res'l./Agri Lot LA 6,437sqm
Lot 190-A-2 Along National Highway, Brgy. Ondoy, Ivisan
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,719,000.00

Prop. 60- Comm'l Lot w/ Improvement
LA 1,500 sqm
Lot 1865-A –1 Along Nat'l Rd (Roxas Ave)Km. 1, Brgy Lawaan, Roxas City
Minimum Bid Price: P 5,034,000.00

Residential Lot, Bo. Andres Bonifacio, Roxas City

Prop. 61 - Lot 956-B-2-D LA 195sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 56,959.00

Prop. 62 - Lot 956-B-2-E LA 204sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 59,588.00

Prop. 63 - Lot 956-B-2-F LA 273 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 79,742 .00

Prop. 64 - Lot 956-B-2-G LA 273sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 79,742.00

Prop. 65 - Lot 956-B-2-H LA 219sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 63,969.00

ILOILO

Prop. 66-Residential Lot LA5,536sqm
Lot 934-B –3 Molo Arevalo Blvd., Brgy. Sto. Niño Sur, Arevalo,
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,575,000.00

Prop. 67 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 1,787 sqm
Lot 2609 Gonzaga St., Purok 14, Poblacion, Pavia
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,674,000.00

NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

Prop. 68 - Res'l. Lot w/ Improvement
LA 997 sqm FA 250 sqm
Lot 1 Blk 10 corner Kametal Drive & unnamed Subd., Road, Brgy. Bata, Bacolod City
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,917,000.00

Prop. 69 - Comm'l Lot LA 600 sqm
Lot 4-A along Magsaysay Ave., Brgy Singcang- Airport, Bacolod City
Minimum Bid Price: P 4,500,000.00

Prop. 70 - Comm'l Lot LA 730 sqm
Lot 4-B along Magsaysay Ave., Brgy. Singcang- Airport
Minimum Bid Price: P 5.475.000.00

MINDANAO

DAVAO CITY

Prop. 71 - Res'l. Lot LA 600 sqm
Lot 2 Blk 1 Central Park Blvd., Santos Marketing Subd., Bangkal
Minimum Bid Price: P 1,200,000.00

Commercial Lot, 8TH Ave. & Soliman & Leon Garcia Sts., Brgy. Agdao

Prop. 72 - Lot 2-B LA 7,108 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 7,328,000.00

Prop. 73 - Lot 2-C LA 7,108 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 7,328,000.00

Prop. 74 - Lot 2-D-1 LA 450 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 3,600,000.00

Prop. 75 - Lot 2-D-2 LA 5,899 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 47,192,000.00

Prop. 76 - Lot 2-D-2 LA 2,738 sqm
Minimum Bid Price: P 21,904,000.00

SHOW MONEY P25,000.00 ~ Per Property

AUCTION MANAGER **CENTURY PROPERTIES MANAGEMENT, INC.**

MALU: (0915) 789-0650, SOL: (0910) 306-7444, YOLY: (0921) 780-5979,
CASEY: (0906) 305-1360, MUFFET : (0915) 412-5196

HOTLINE NUMBERS: (02)819-7377, (02)819-7374, (02)811-6234

ALL PROPERTIES ARE ON AN "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". PROPERTIES AND PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. THE BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW ANY PROPERTY BEFORE THE AUCTION. INADVERTENT MISPRINTS SHALL NOT ALTER THE PROPERTY'S FACTUAL CONDITION OR SHALL THEY BE DEEMED AS MISREPRESENTATION OF THE PROPERTY. PLEASE CONFIRM ATTENDANCE TO ENSURE SEATS AND PARKING

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late **JUANITA BARIN CARRILLO** and **ELVIRA CARILLO CATLEDGE** has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs as per Doc. No. 225, Page No. 46, Book No. 65, Series of 2006 before Notary Public Atty. Lope M. Velasco of Makati City.

(PDI – August 3, 10 & 17, 2006)

PHIL-JAPAN Friendship Year on UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL IBC 13

FROM BEING AN occupied territory in the 1940's to a major recipient of development aid and up to date – that is how the Philippines relations to Japan has evolved for the last 50 years. For many Filipinos, Japan is not only the land of the rising sun but a land that offers a wealth of opportunities.

Up Close and Personal with Marissa del Mar, a telemagazine on people, places, events and human interest featured AMBASSADOR RYUICHIRO YAMAZAKI on this year's significant celebration of the Philippines – Japan Friendship Year.

AMBASSADOR YAMAZAKI discussed Japan's contribution in our country's investment, projects for the indigenous people in Northern Mindanao, scholarship grants for Filipinos, and the new visa application of which they qoute "applicant friendly".

Up Close and Personal's special episode yesterday, Aug. 2, 2006 at 10pm, IBC 13, also featured the exclusive video coverage the said celebration held in Makati. Amongst the guests were Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo, Japan Minister for Foreign Affairs-Honorable Taro Aso, Supreme Court's Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, Philpost Chairman Chito Villanueva, Chairman Alfonso Yuchengco of the Yuchengco Group of Companies, Ambassador Antonio Villamayor, Amabassador Ceferino Benedicto and Congressman Roilo Golez of the 2nd District of Parañaque.

BATCH '90 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Rizal High School Batch '90 will hold its 2nd General Assembly & Induction of Officers on Sept. 2, 2006, 5:30 p.m at RHS Alumni Hall. Call 0915-9370383 Irene Hintoloro for details.

PHILIPPINE NAVY
HEADQUARTERS NAVAL LOGISTICS CENTER
Fort San Felipe, Cavite City

01 August 2006

INVITATION TO BID

The Philippine Navy is inviting interested proponents to purchase thru pubic auction on "as is, where is" basis, the following:

Lot	Description	Location	Min Bid Price	Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline of Submission/ Opening of Bids	Price of Application Form
1	Used Oil	Naval Petroleum Depot, Sangley Pt., Cavite City	P118,440.00	9:00 AM August 8, 2006	9:00 AM August 16, 2006	P500.00
2	F/B Calypso	Fort San Felipe, Cavite City	P103,500.00			P500.00

Pre-Bid Conference : Naval Sea Systems Command Conference Room, Fort San Felipe, Cavite City.
Bid Bond : Cash/manager's/cashier's check equivalent to 10% of the offered price.
Requirements for Lots 1 and 2:
- a. Business Name
- b. Mayor's Permit

Additional requirement for Lot 1: Valid EMB-DENR Accreditation as Treatment Storage and Disposal (TSD) Facility operator (Waste Oil Treaters).
For Inquiry: Contact PN Disposal Committee (PNDC) Secretariat at Tel Nr 431-02-04 Loc 5543.
The PNDC reserves the right to accept or reject any bids, to annul bidding process and to reject bids at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder/s.

For the CHAIRMAN, PN DISPOSAL COMMITTEE:

(Sgd.) CDR EULOGIO P LUTERIA PN
Secretariat, PNDC

(PDI–August 3, 4 & 5, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel No 893-1320, Local 5288

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Winch Trailer Mounted with Accessories under GQ 616730
Approved Budget: PHP 4,900,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Mr. Anthony E. Ciriaco** starting **July 27, 2006** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **August 03, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Office Wall Clock Time) of August 17, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - July 27 & Aug. 3, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN

Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

(In compliance with R.A. 7041)

A. GRAFT INVESTIGATION & PROSECUTION OFFICER II - SG 27
(2 positions)

1. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATION BUREAU (PIAB) A** - Item No. OMBA-GIO2-40-1998
2. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATION BUREAU (PIAB) E** - Item No. OMBA-GIO2-33-1998

Education: Bachelor of Laws; Experience: Four (4) years of experience in the practice of law, counseling, investigation/prosecution of cases, hearings of administrative/criminal cases, legal research or other related works; Training: 24 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (BAR)

B. GRAFT INVESTIGATION & PROSECUTION OFFICER I - SG 26
(3 positions)

1. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATION BUREAU (PIAB) A** - Item No. OMBA-GIO1-58-1998
2. **PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION & ADMINISTRATIVE ADJUDICATION BUREAU (PIAB) B** - Item No. OMBA-GIO1-119-1998
3. **PROSECUTION AND MONITORING BUREAU** - Item No. OMBA-GIO1-63-1998

Education: Bachelor of Laws; Experience: Three (3) years of experience in the practice of law, counseling, investigation/prosecution of cases, hearings of administrative/criminal cases, legal research or other related works; Training: 24 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: RA 1080 (BAR)

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements:

1. A letter stating the position applied for:
2. Duly accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 212);
3. 1"x1" picture (colored);
4. * Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility:
5. * Transcript of Records;
6. * Certificates of Seminars/Training Attended;
7. * Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the positions assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable);
8. * Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
9. Statement duly signed by the applicant as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

* Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Officer for comparison with the photocopies.

More Classified Ads:
Davao City Water,
AFP Bids & Awards
B2

Republic of the Philippines
City of Olongapo
-o-
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
General Services Office, 2/F City Hall Complex
Tel./Fax No. 047-222-2699
Web: www.olongapocity.gov.ph
Email: Olongapo@pldi.net

July 28, 2006

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The City Government of Olongapo, through the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites system integrators/solution providers/distributors/contractors to apply for the eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Hospital Information System
Location : James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital, Olongapo City
Contract No. : OC-043-JLGMH-004-06 GD
Brief Description : Provision of a fully integrated hospital information system which will satisfy the needs and facilitate the objectives for computerization of James L. Gordon Memorial Hospital
Approved Budget : Php 10,318,600.00

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar and related project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding and have the key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under puchase) available for the prosecution of the project.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using nondiscretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights to privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A.) 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from the Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section 12 of the Bidding Documents. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial, requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post qualification procedure.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

COMPLETE SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

DATE	ACTIVITIES	VENUE
July 31, 2006 to Aug. 14, 2006	Posted at GEPS Website & Conspicuous Places/Newspaper Nationwide Circulation	
Aug. 15, 2006 to Aug. 22, 2006	Issuance of Bid Documents upon submission of Letter of Intent and payment of non-refundable bid form fee of P 22,500.00 8:00 am to 5:00 pm from the BAC Secretariat. Method of payment will be in cash	BAC Secretariat 2/F Gen. Services Office, Olongapo City Hall
Aug. 23, 2006	Pre-Bidding Conference at 10:00 a.m.	
Sept. 06, 2006	Opening of Bids at 10:00 am	
Sept. 7 to 13, 2006	Bid Evaluation / Post Qualification	
Sept. 14, 2006	Notice of Awards	

The City Government of Olongapo reserves the right to accept and reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to cancel all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Further information may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat, General Services Office, 2/F Olongapo City Hall.

(Sgd.) MERLITO J. MAJARUCON
Head, BAC Secretariat

NOTED BY:
(Sgd.) Atty. ANGELITO R. OROZCO
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Aug. 3 & 14, 2006)

PNOC SHIPPING & TRANSPORT CORPORATION

S & L Building, 1500 Roxas Boulevard, Manila, Philippines
P.O. Box EA-468, Ermita 1000, Manila
Tel. Nos. 525-9271 to 75
Fax No. 525-8376 / 524-8968

INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFER

The **PNOC SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT CORPORATION (PSTC)** invites shipowners and brokers to submit offers for the charter (time or bareboat) of a clean petroleum tanker in good trading condition and having the following particulars:

Tanker Capacity (98%) : 24,000 to 35,000 barrels
Age : 9 years old or younger
Classed by : IACS Member
Cargo Tanks : Ten (10)

Inquiries may be directed to **Mr. Norberto A. Corpuz** at Telephone No. (632) 525-92-71 loc 230 or via email address: pstc_tanker@yahoo.com.

Kindly signify your interest and reply via the above telephone and email address:

Schedule of Submission of Offers :
Technical / Financial Offers : September 14, 2006
1400 Hours, Manila Time

The PNOC Shipping and Transport Corporation reserves the right to accept or reject any offers, to annul the process, and to reject all offers at any time prior to award, without incurring any liability to the affected offeror or offerors.

PSTC TANKER COMMITTEE

(PDI--Aug. 3, 2006)

Announcement

This is to inform the public that the following are the new Incorporators of Verdant Manpower Mobilization Center, Inc.

Danilo Monarquia Coronacion
Chairman

Veyon Bulanadi-Calinawan
President

Anita Mora-Claravall
Treasurer

Ma. Fe Miranda Soriano
Corporate Secretary

Maria Lourdes Arnaldo de Guzman
Director

Amelita Garingalao Ledesma
Director

Perpetuo Canasa Marino
Director

This is in compliance to the requirements of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration with regards to our company's application for renewal of our License.

Verdant Manpower Mobilization Center, Inc.
#32 AM Bldg. Narra St., Project 3, Quezon City
Tel. No. 913-7138 / 435-4500

(PDI - Aug. 3, 2006)

INVITATION TO BID

WASTE MANAGEMENT CONTRACTORS FOR MERVILLE PARK SUBDIVISION

INTERESTED PARTIES MAY GET COPY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR BID & SCOPE OF SERVICE FROM

THE MERVILLE PARK HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION
RIVIERA STREET, MERVILLE PARK,
PARAÑAQUE CITY, METRO MANILA
TEL. NOS. 824-9683; 822-2416 OR 0917-9862524

BID SHOULD BE SUBMITTED ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 21, 2006.

(PDI--Aug. 3, 2006)

OBITUARIES

The Federation of Electrical
& Electronics Suppliers
& Manufacturers of the
Philippines, Inc., formerly
PESA, deeply condoles
with the family of

FELIPE YU HAN YAT

PESA President (1957 - 1959)

who passed away on
29th of July 2006 at the
Makati Medical Center.

Message of Thanks

The bereaved wife, **Luz R. Acuña**, children, **Nohra & Benjie**, **Edith & Bong**, **Boy (Ting) & Mercy**, and **Jun** (†), grandchildren, and great-grandchild of the late

PEDRO LOSANTAS ACUÑA

of Legazpi City

who joined his Creator on July 13, 2006

wish to convey their heartfelt gratitude to all relatives, friends, and all those who visited & kept vigil, offered Masses & prayers, sent condolences & flowers, attended the Necrological services at Legazpi City Hall, joined the funeral rites and who in countless ways helped and comforted them in their moment of grief. Sincere thanks to the management, doctors & nursing staff of Estevez Memorial Hospital too.

FLORENCIA "Poden" TAN-NG

Peacefully joined her Creator on July 31, 2006 at the age of 71.

Her bereaved husband **Kun Lua Ng**; children **Ilen, Sonia & Paulino** (†), **Edith, Helen & Apao, Merilyn, Eddie & Olive** (†), **Rony & Ma. Suo, Michael, Hilda, Susan & Abigail**; grandchildren **Argen, Arnel, Ara, Arvin, Arlene, Bryan, Edelyn, Cheene, Ronamarie Suo, Marc Ronan & Joshua**, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Presidential Chapel of Cosmopolitan Funeral Homes, Junquera, Cebu City.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 06, 2006 at the Celestial Meadows Memorial Garden, Minglanilla, Cebu after the 1:00 p.m. Requiem Mass at Immaculate Heart of Mary.

> *Jesus said: " I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die."*

Our dearly beloved Mama

LYDIA A. DIZON

December 17, 1947 – July 22, 2006

of Malinta, Valenzuela

Peacefully joined our Lord at the age of 58.

Her children		grandchildren
Nia & Albert Estonilo	—	**Alarice Sy** **Aldrich Estonilo**
Lelyn & Lanford Choy	—	**Riley Choy**
Kimton Sy		

Brothers, sisters and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her interment was held on July 28, 2006 at the Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Colma, California, USA.

There will be a Mass in honor of her memory on August 5, 2006, Saturday, 8:30 am at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Marulas, Valenzuela.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
2 Corinthians 5:8

WILFRIDO "WILLY" AMPIL CRUCILLO

July 29, 1941 - August 1, 2006

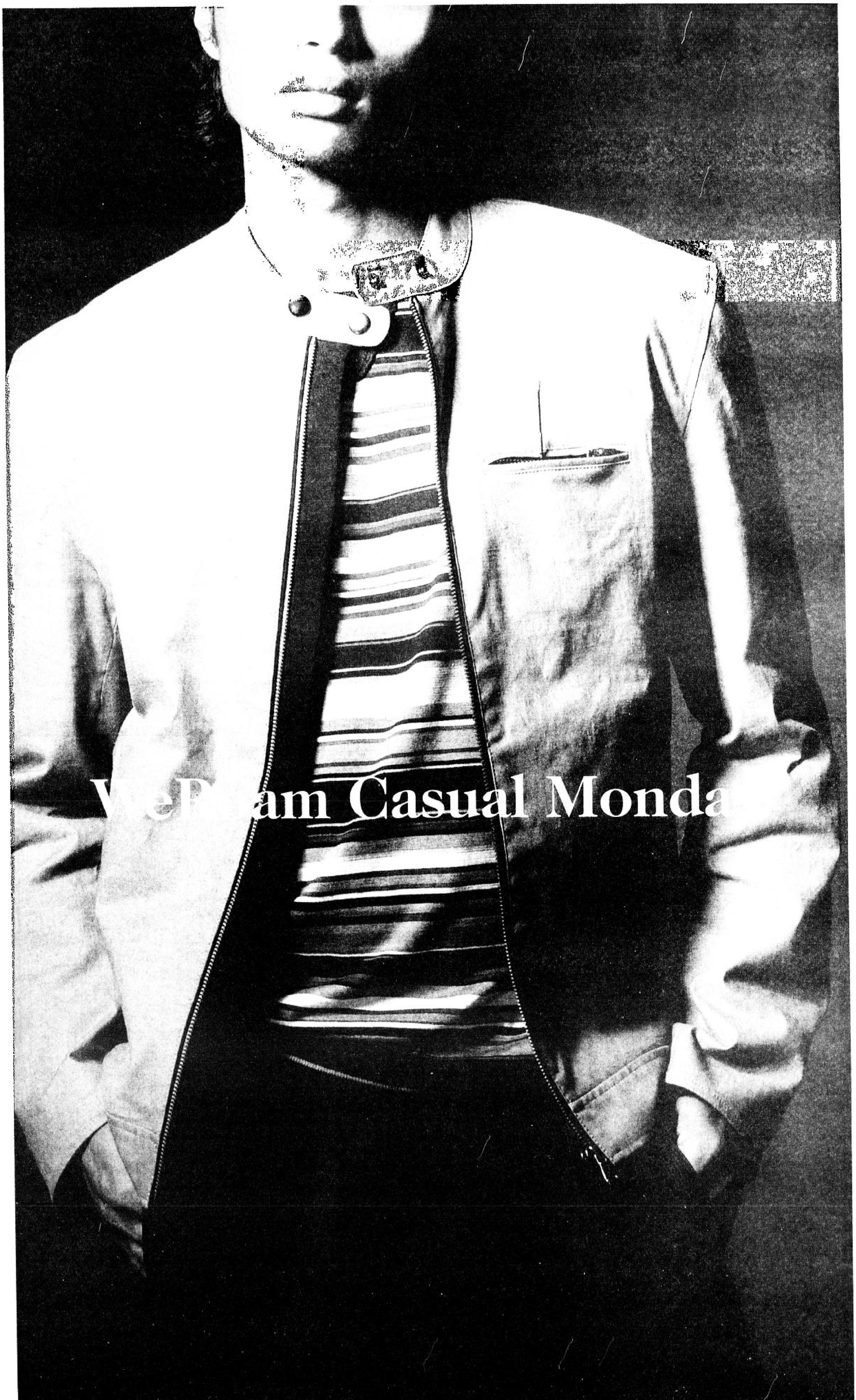
Peacefully joined our Lord
*and his parents **Cornelio and Marina Ampil Crucillo***
on August 1, 2006 in Quezon City, Philippines.

His brother, sisters and in-laws: **Dino** and **Leynie**, **Dale** and **Bernhard**, **Vicky** and **Cesar**, and **Rory**; nieces, nephews and in-laws: **Trichie** and **Jem**, **Lissa**, **Arnie**, **Yay** and **Dino**, **Tanya**, **Berni** and **Autumn**, **Henry**, **Rob**, **Mia** and **Jeff**; grand nieces and nephews: **Reggie**, **Nikki**, **Miggy**, **Santi** and **Violet**; cousins and other relatives and friends request the pious reader to join them in prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz, Inc., G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 6, 2006 at the Holy Cross Memorial Park after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

(Please omit flowers)



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LIFESTYLE
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

IN THIS ISSUE
■ **Project Kulinarya:** Testing once, testing twice, almost done /C4

Call to readers

WE WANT TO COMPILE A READING LIST THAT we hope will jumpstart the interest of Filipino boys in reading and convert them into readers for life.

E-mail us your pick of the best books, magazines and even comics for boys of all ages. Tell us briefly why you've selected each.

Send your list to books4boys@inquirer.com.ph or text 0918-3824061. Include name, address and day-time phone number.

MONDAY **ARTS & BOOKS** ● TUESDAY **FITNESS** ● WEDNESDAY **2BU** ● THURSDAY **FOOD** ● FRIDAY **FASHION & BEAUTY**

Ask for recipes and you shall receive

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

I HAVEA BACKLOG OF RECIPE requests so today I am sharing two delicious recipes. Bon Appetit!

I own a catering service and was wondering if you could help me perfect my Hainanese chicken. Mine is always tough or raw. It would really help my business.

PAT P.

Hainanese Chicken is quite easy to make, but there are rules and techniques to it. I'm sharing all that I know with you.

Make sure the chicken is newly slaughtered. Frozen chicken is never good for this! Good luck!

1.5 kg fresh chicken (Keep head and feet, without the feathers, of course. This adds to the flavor. Remove innards. From the back side of the chicken, by the cavity, take excess fat off the chicken. Save fat for rice.)

2 tsp salt

Season chicken with salt inside out.

Stock:

1 kg chicken bones
1 pc onion
3 pc leeks
4 slices ginger
10 garlic cloves
Salt
10- 12 c water

Combine ingredients in a huge wok or stock pot. Boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain. Bring stock back to a rolling boil, lower heat and put chicken in. Make sure it is totally submerged. Cook for one hour. Now this is vital: Make sure that your heat is at its lowest and that once the chicken is in the stockpot, your stock does not come to a boil anymore. Boiling tends to make the chicken tough which Hainanese isn't.

> Once the chicken is in the stockpot, make sure the heat is at lowest

After one hour, remove chicken from the pot and submerge into a bowl of iced water for 10 minutes. This stops the chicken from cooking, stops it from falling apart and makes it springy on the outside, yet nice and tender on the inside.

Remove, transfer to a rack and brush with 2 tsp sesame oil. If you want a nicely "tanned" chicken you can combine the sesame oil with and 2 tsp light soy sauce.

Rice:

¼ c chicken fat
6 crushed garlic
6 thin slices ginger
3 c long-grain Thai rice
Salt
4½ c stock, from chicken above
1 *pandan* leaf, tied
½ c green onions

Cast rice cooker pot, not the whole rice cooker, just the pan over heat. Add chicken fat and saute until fat has been extracted.

Add garlic, onions and ginger. Cook until fragrant. Add rice, mix well. Add stock and *pandan*. Transfer to rice cooker and cook. When done, season to taste with salt and mix well. Add green onions.

Soup:

To the remaining stock add 1/3 c of chopped green onions. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve with Hainanese chicken. Some people even add shredded cabbage. Do so if you wish.

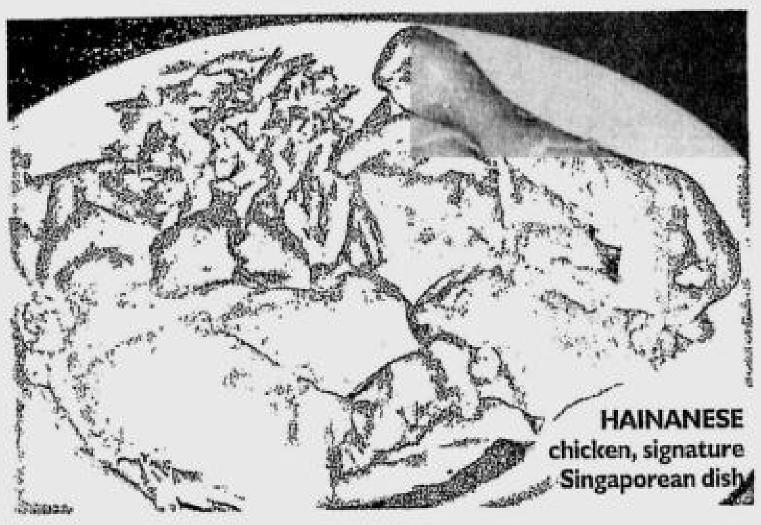
To serve:

Garnish with sliced cucumbers and tomatoes

Sauce:

3 tbsp oil
1 tbsp sesame oil
2 shallots, sliced
2 garlic cloves
2 tsp grated ginger
½ c light soy sauce
½ c chicken stock, from above
2 tsp sugar

Mix well. Heat oils. Saute garlic and shallots. Add light soy sauce, chicken stock and sugar. Strain sauce if you wish. Serve with chicken. Another sauce that you may use is Kecap Manis, dark sweet soy sauce (available at Santis).



HAINANESE chicken, signature Singaporean dish

Serve with chili sauce.

I am in the family way and *naglilihi sa* Phad Thai. Can you please teach me how to make it? By the way I never miss Kitchen Rescue, it's the best!

MRS. DE CASTRO

Here it is, just for you! May Phad Thai bring spunk to your bundle of joy! Just don't name him or her Sawasdee ka, okay?! Congratulations and all the best!

Phad Thai Sauce:

ASK FOR RECIPES/ C3

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS!
See her live as she belts out hits from her latest album from Dyna Records.
Danica Sotto
[illegible]
[illegible] discover
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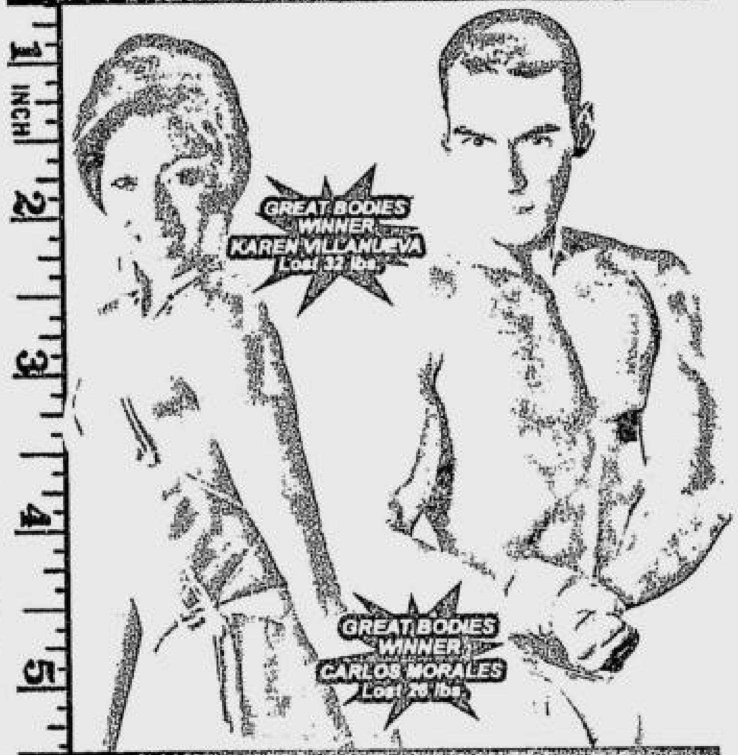
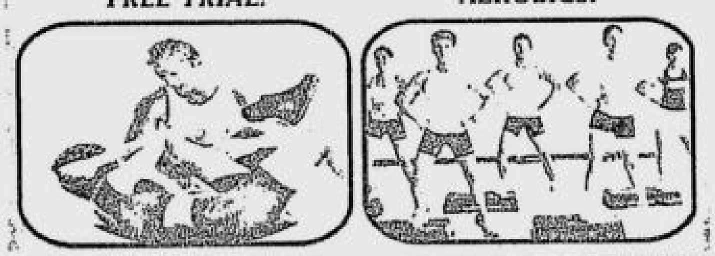
www.robinsonsmalls.com



INCH
1
2
3
4
5
GREAT BODIES WINNER KAREN VILLANUEVA Lost 32 lbs.
GREAT BODIES WINNER CARLOS MORALES Lost 26 lbs.



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CEBU Juna/Anne Basement 1&2 Ayala Center 231-3254
GREENHILLS Ana 2/F Atlanta Ctr. #31 Annapolis 726-6505
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MALATE Daisy/Mhaye 6F Adriatico Square Adriatico, Manila 536-0619
MEGAMALL Ruby/Krishna 2F Bldg. A Mandaluyong 631-3869
PASAY ROAD Cher/Maan/Val 1032 Arnaiz Ave. cor. Hernandez St. 887-1335 09178515920
PASIG Dino/Jiggs Restaurant Ave. Marcos Hi-way 681-5333
SM NORTH Mitch 2F Annex Bldg. Quezon City 929-5429
SUBIC Betty/Percy 2F Times Square Rizal Hi-way 252-6514
TRAFALGAR Emily [illegible] H.V. dela Costa 814-0138

SKIN CENTER: ALABANG 7750587/09183912510 BINONDO 2420728/09178224399 CALOOCAN 3657653 GREENHILLS 7261526/09194986196 MALATE 5259891/09213173415 MEGAMALL 6377543/09162479753 PASAY RD. 8873530/09156893088 PASIG 6473816/09275341314

NASAL CONGESTION

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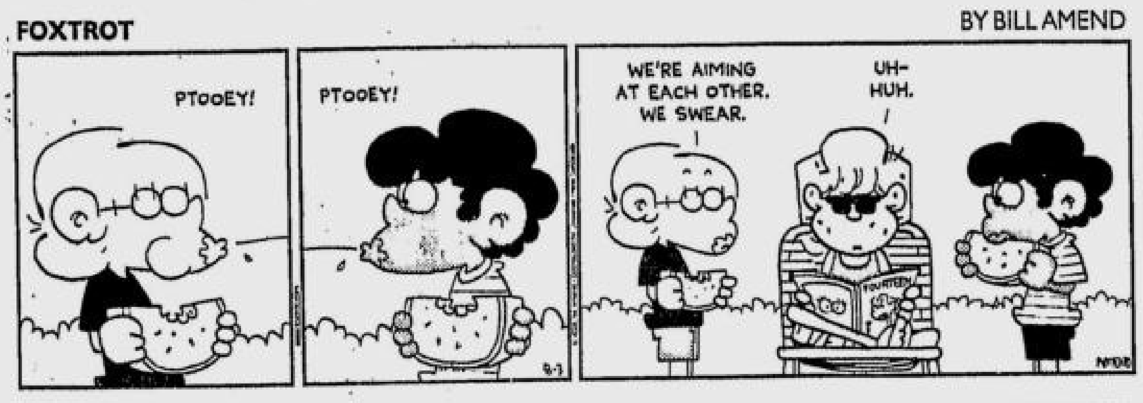
Paracetamol
Decolgen® Forte
Capsule

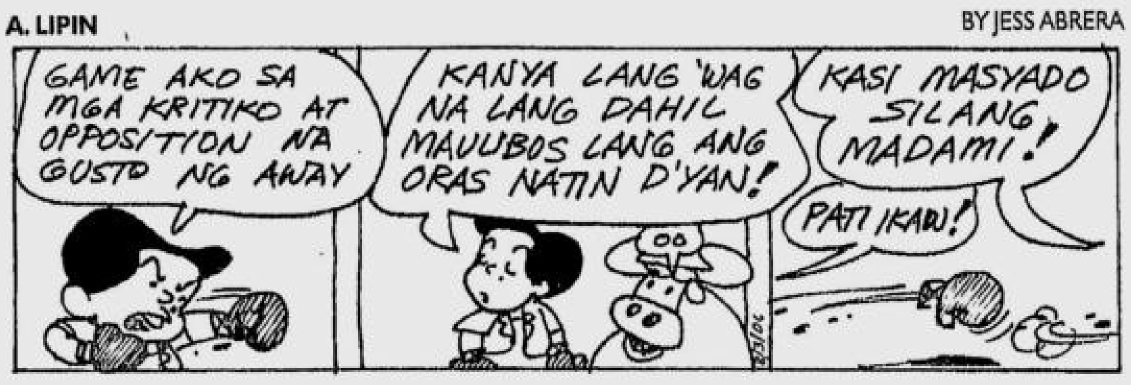
Phenylpropanolamine HCl
Paracetamol
No-Drowse Decolgen®
Caplet

If symptoms persist, consult your doctor.

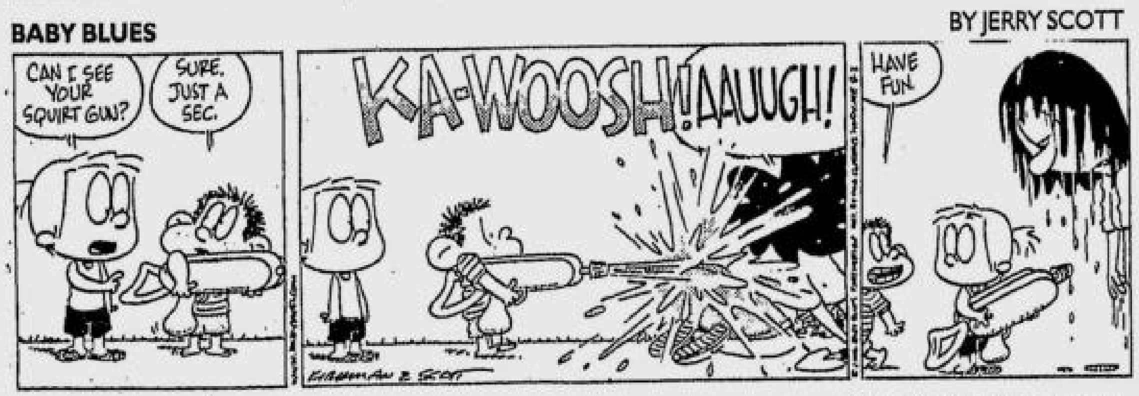
FOXTROT BY BILL AMEND


PTOOEY!
PTOOEY!
WE'RE AIMING AT EACH OTHER. WE SWEAR.
UH-HUH.

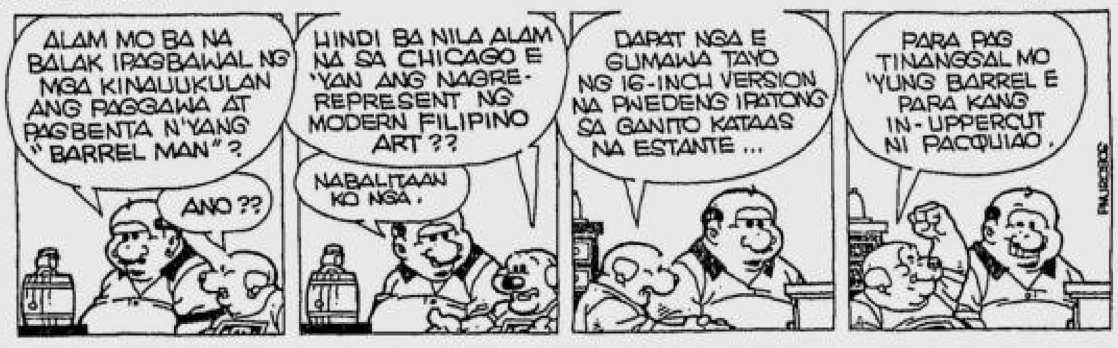
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


GAME AKO SA MGA KRITIKO AT OPPOSITION NA GUSTO NG AWAY
KANYA LANG 'WAG NA LANG DAHIL MAUUBOS LANG ANG ORAS NATIN D'YAN!
KASI MASYADO SILANG MADAMI!
PATI IKAW!

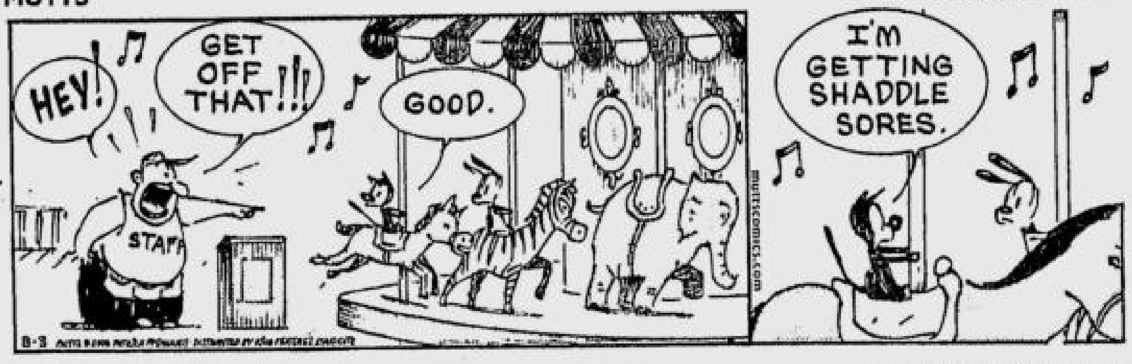
BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


CAN I SEE YOUR SQUIRT GUN?
SURE. JUST A SEC.
KA-WOOSH!
AAUUGH!
HAVE FUN.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

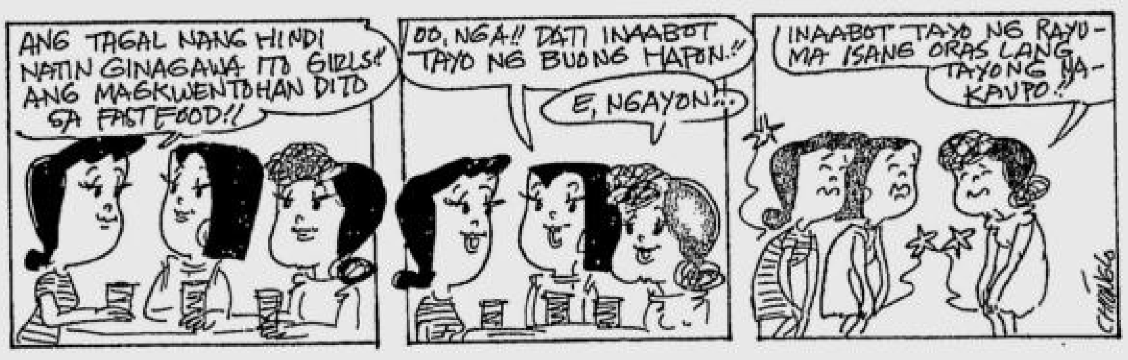
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


ALAM MO BA NA BALAK IPAGBAWAL NG MGA KINAUUKULAN ANG PAGGAWA AT PAGBENTA N'YANG "BARREL MAN"?
ANO??
HINDI BA NILA ALAM NA SA CHICAGO E 'YAN ANG NAGRE-REPRESENT NG MODERN FILIPINO ART??
NABALITAAN KO NGA.
DAPAT NGA E GUMAWA TAYO NG 16-INCH VERSION NA PWEDENG IPATONG SA GANITO KATAAS NA ESTANTE...
PARA PAG TINANGGAL MO 'YUNG BARREL E PARA KANG IN-UPPERCUT NI PACQUIAO.

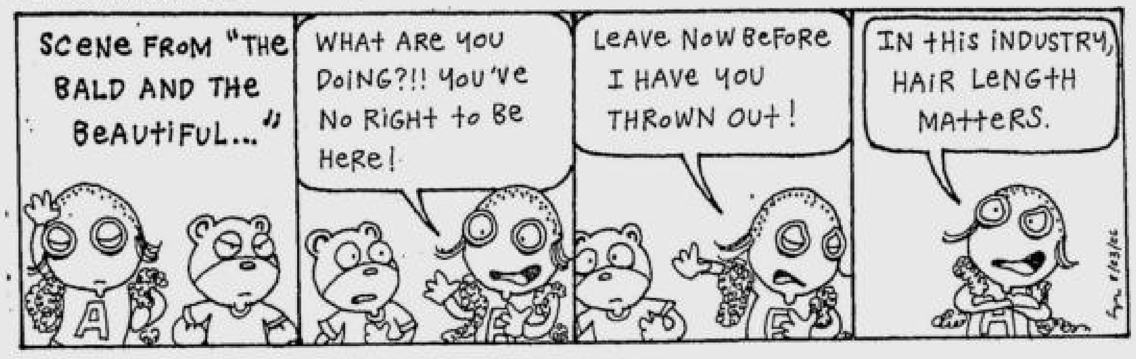
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


HEY!
GET OFF THAT!!!
STAFF
GOOD.
I'M GETTING SHADDLE SORES.
muttscomics.com

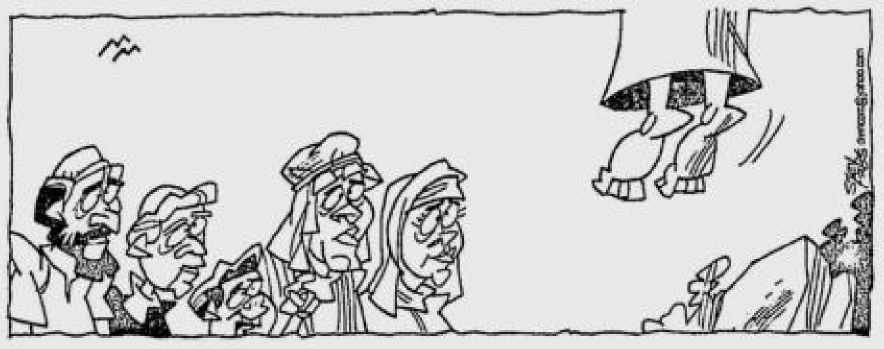
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANG TAGAL NANG HINDI NATIN GINAGAWA ITO GIRLS!! ANG MAGKWENTOHAN DITO SA FASTFOOD!!
OO, NGA!! DATI INAABOT TAYO NG BUONG HAPON.!!
E, NGAYON..!!
INAABOT TAYO NG RAYUMA ISANG ORAS LANG TAYONG NAKAUPO.!!
CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SCENE FROM "THE BALD AND THE BEAUTIFUL..."
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!! YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO BE HERE!
LEAVE NOW BEFORE I HAVE YOU THROWN OUT!
IN THIS INDUSTRY, HAIR LENGTH MATTERS.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

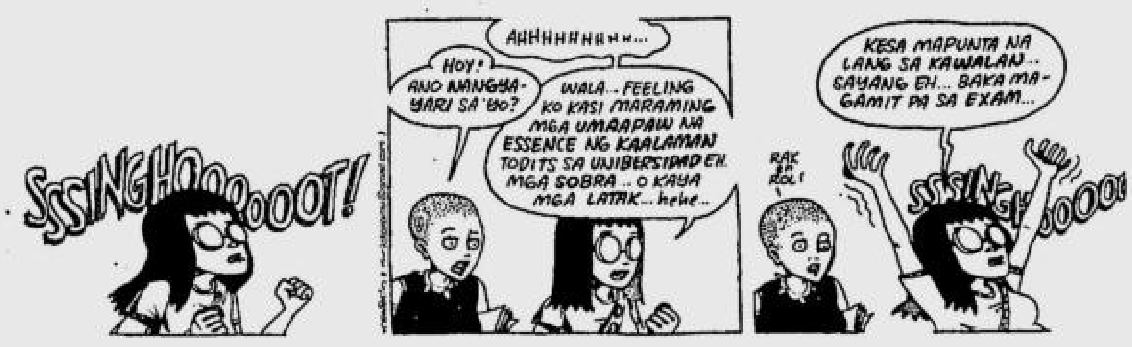


HULAAN KUNG ANO ANG NANGYAYARI SA PICTURE

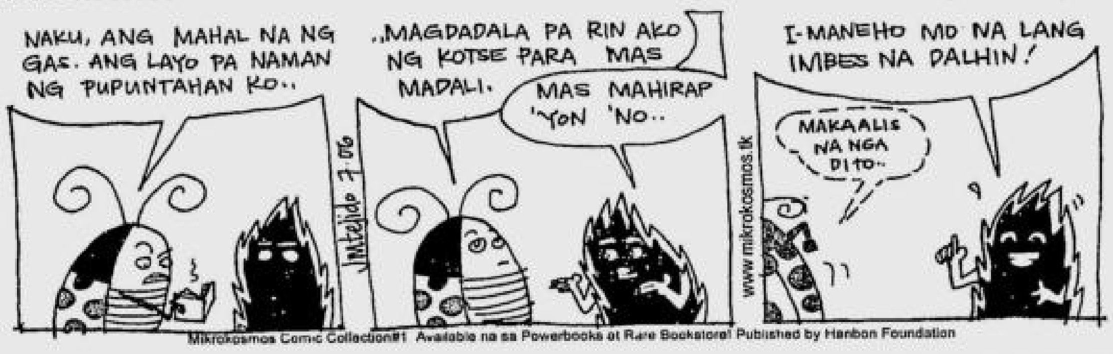
A. MAY TAONG BINITAY

B. ASCENSION OF JESUS

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

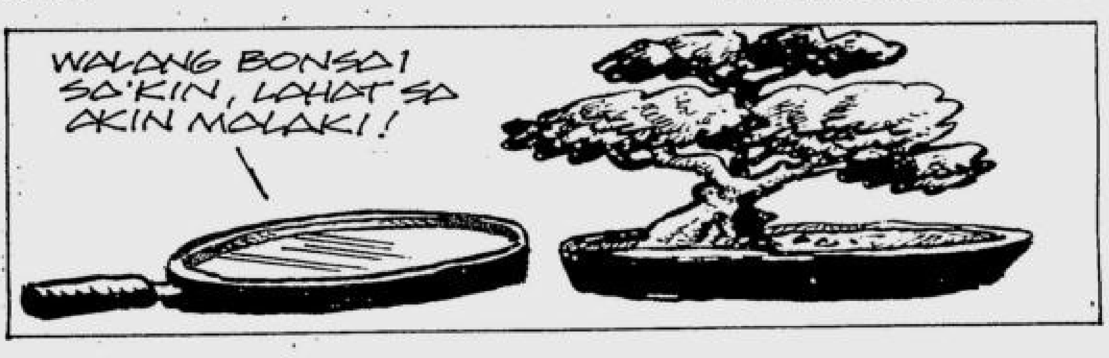

SSSINGHOOOOOOOT!
AHHHHHHHHH...
HOY! ANO NANGYAYARI SA 'YO?
WALA... FEELING KO KASI MARAMING MGA UMAAPAW NA ESSENCE NG KAALAMAN TODITS SA UNIBERSIDAD EH. MGA SOBRA... O KAYA MGA LATAK... hehe...
RAK EN ROL!
KESA MAPUNTA NA LANG SA KAWALAN... SAYANG EH... BAKA MAGAMIT PA SA EXAM...
SSSINGHOOOO

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

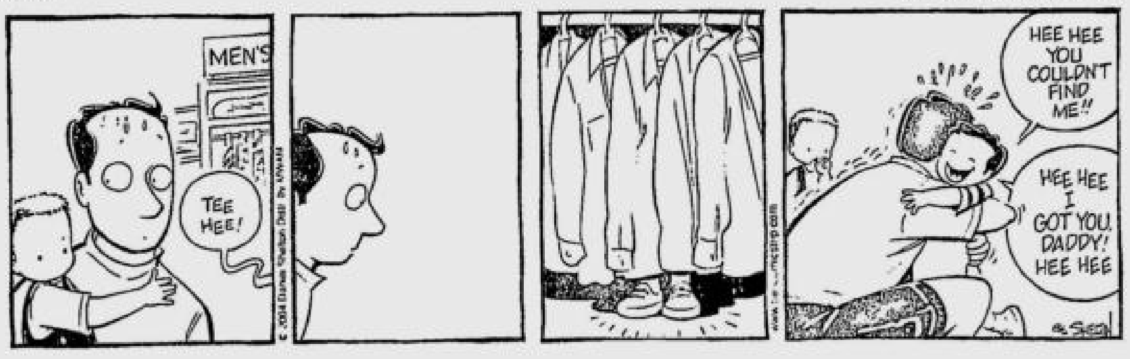

NAKU, ANG MAHAL NA NG GAS. ANG LAYO PA NAMAN NG PUPUNTAHAN KO..
..MAGDADALA PA RIN AKO NG KOTSE PARA MAS MADALI.
MAS MAHIRAP 'YON 'NO..
I-MANEHO MO NA LANG IMBES NA DALHIN!
MAKAALIS NA NGA DITO..
www.mikrokosmos.tk

Mikrokosmos Comic Collection#1 Available na sa Powerbooks at Rare Bookstore! Published by Hanbon Foundation

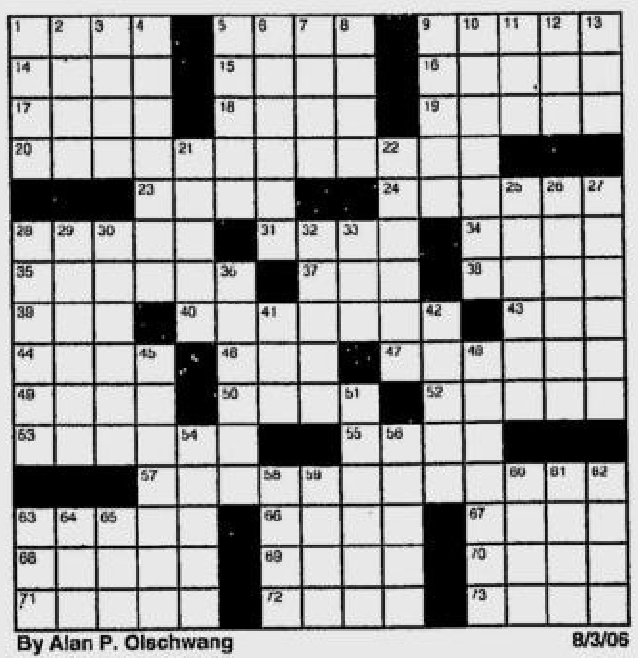
TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


WALANG BONSAI SA'KIN, LAHAT SA AKIN MALAKI!

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


MEN'S
TEE HEE!
HEE HEE YOU COULDN'T FIND ME!!
HEE HEE I GOT YOU, DADDY! HEE HEE

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
8/3/06

ACROSS
1 Close-fitting
5 Pond plant
9 Director Cameron
14 Per pop
15 Navy commando
16 Pass on (to)
17 Race distance
18 Hatcher or Garr
19 Put forward
20 Start of Evan Esar quip
23 Biblical weed
24 Beginnings
28 Part 2 of quip
31 Daybreak
34 Field of study
35 Up and about
37 Reel companion
38 Regan's father
39 Toshiba rival
40 Part 3 of quip
43 Mach+ jet
44 N.Y. Met or L.A. Dodger
46 One of the Three Stooges
47 Roof support
49 Mountain in Thessaly
50 Sturluson saga
52 Part 4 of quip
53 Fisherman of a sort
55 Bill of fare
57 End of quip
63 Poem division
66 Bring down the house?
67 Stole or cloak
68 Indian, for one
69 Impulse conductor
70 Chills and fever
71 Trifling
72 Collection of fluff
73 Times long past

DOWN
1 Big rig
2 Childlike person
3 Pac-10 sch.
4 Segregated neighborhoods
5 On the move
6 Gave the evil eye
7 Long-snouted fish
8 Landed
9 Emulate Bing
10 Thumbs down
11 Switch position
12 Tiny
13 Goof
21 Atropos, Clotho, et al.
22 Over thar
25 1974 Mocedades hit
26 Playful prankster
27 "No Exit" dramatist
28 Yoplait rival
29 Bully's closer
30 Most pleasant
32 Moved in a curved path
33 Misfortune
36 __ uno
41 Food fish
42 "Send Me a Lover" singer
45 Knocking sound
48 Like intersections
51 Online bookseller
54 Jet black
56 Arena happening
58 Russian river
59 Hack
60 Jason's ship
61 Asian ox
62 Fencer's foil
63 Beat walker
64 Dead-eye
65 Butterfly catcher

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

E	C	R	U	■	A	T	R	A	■	G	A	M	U	T
R	O	O	T	■	E	R	O	S	■	A	W	A	R	E
A	L	D	O	■	R	E	N	T	■	M	A	G	N	A
S	O	A	P	B	O	X	D	E	R	B	Y	■	■	■
E	R	N	I	E	S	■	O	R	A	L	■	A	D	S
■	■	■	A	L	O	E	■	■	R	E	A	G	A	N
A	C	T	■	A	L	L	S	T	A	R	G	A	M	E
R	A	R	E	■	■	A	A	A	■	■	A	P	E	R
S	P	E	L	L	I	N	G	B	E	E	■	E	S	T
O	R	A	L	E	S	■	■	S	M	E	E	■	■	■
N	A	T	■	F	E	M	A	■	P	O	T	T	E	R
■	■	■	S	T	E	E	P	L	E	C	H	A	S	E
R	A	D	I	I	■	T	H	A	R	■	I	R	A	S
U	N	I	T	E	■	R	I	C	O	■	C	O	L	E
R	A	K	E	S	■	O	D	E	R	■	S	T	E	T

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8/3/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're enormously courageous and idealistic. You want what's best for yourself and others. Obstacles do not deter you. In fact, danger only strengthens your resolve. You like to play the role of hero or heroine. (And you often do.) The older you get, the more passionate you become about life. Your year ahead is full of bright, exciting new beginnings!

Birthdate of: Martin Sheen, actor; Martha Stewart, homemaking guru; Tony Bennett, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Do something that pleases you today. You want to have fun, and surely you know how to do this. Watch a movie. Catch a game. Make dinner plans with friends. Entertain family.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a lovely day to putter around the house and take care of domestic details. It's also a good day to invite others over. Share your love of creature comforts, good drink and good food.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's a busy day. Shopping, short trips, conversations with siblings, negotiations, plus studying, reading and writing will go extremely well. Keep up the pace.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Money and financial matters are your primary concern today. You'll overlook nothing. You're able to see the big picture today.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This continues to be your time, dear Leo. Don't hesitate to put yourself first. It's your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Seek out quiet time if you can find it today. It's busy out there, and you need to buffer yourself from reality. You want peace and quiet. (And hopefully, you shall have it.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Accept all invitations. This is an unusually social time for you. Seek out the company of those you enjoy. Talk to friends about your goals and dreams for the future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Dealings with authority figures (bosses, parents, teachers and the police) are significant now. Fortunately, people are easily impressed with you. Good. (That's all it takes.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Make travel plans or get out of town, if you can. You're desperate for adventure. You're hungry to expand your world and learn anything new.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Passionate relationships are unusually intense now. You have a lot of emotions simmering just below the surface. Nothing is casual.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're focused on partners and close friends now. Fine—this is as it should be. Be prepared to go more than halfway to achieve a good understanding with someone.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Act on your urge to get better organized. It won't always be this easy. Declutter your world. Paint, clean and reorganize whatever you can.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

	7		5		4		8	
3								7
				9				
9			4		5			1
		3				6		
5			6		8			3
				2				
1								8
	4		3		1		7	

Difficulty Level ★★★
8/03

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

2	8	1	9	3	4	7	6	5
5	9	7	2	6	8	3	4	1
4	3	6	7	5	1	8	2	9
8	7	5	3	4	6	1	9	2
3	6	2	8	1	9	4	5	7
9	1	4	5	7	2	6	3	8
1	5	8	6	9	3	2	7	4
7	4	3	1	2	5	9	8	6
6	2	9	4	8	7	5	1	3

Difficulty Level ★★★

Eat your way to a trip to Singapore

Text and photos by Linda B. Bolido

SAMPLE SINGAPORE'S RENOWNED cuisine here for a chance to bring your food tasting adventure to the Lion City itself.

Between now and Sept. 30, the Must Try, lah! food promotion of the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) rewards diners one raffle coupon for every P300 spent on food products of participating establishments. Purchases must include one of the establishment's must-try dishes or products.

Ten grand prizes, consisting of round-trip tickets for one in economy class inclusive of four days and three nights single-room accommodation in a deluxe hotel, free daily breakfast and exclusive Shop 'n Eat tour, will be given away for the duration of the promotion. In addition to the 10 grand prizes, 25 consolation prizes are also at stake.

Participating establishments are Singaporean franchises Fish & Co., Kopi Roti, BreadTalk, Bee Cheng Hiang and Rasa which specialize in the city state's cuisine and food items.

Fish & Co., a member of the Bistro Group of Restaurants which operates Outback, TGIFriday's and Italianni's, specializes in seafood dishes, particularly fish and chips.

Kopi Roti offers specialty breads, coffee and teas as served in Singapore's hawkers' stalls. BreadTalk, on the other hand, has introduced the boutique bakery concept with its innovative and unique products.

Bee Cheng Hiang is a distributor of meat products, particularly Chinese-style barbecue items, and snack items.

Rasa, a local franchisee of Singapore's Prima Taste, claims to have locally the best Hainanese Chicken, the quintessentially Singaporean dish. It also serves Beef Rendang.

FISH & Co.'s signature dish (above), the classic Fish & Chips topped with lemon butter sauce; BreadTalk (left) is introducing two new products, Kampong Pork Satay and Nonya Sweet Chili Shrimp

A RASA chef demonstrates how to prepare Hainanese Chicken.

CHICKEN and pork for barbecue, from Bee Cheng Hiang

STB-P aims to offer Filipinos a sampling of the tourist-drawing cuisine

5 monthly winners

Two draws will be held for the two-month period, with each draw choosing five grand winners. Entries submitted the whole month of August will qualify for the first draw and all entries in September will be entered in the second draw.

Explaining the promotion, Rocson Chang, area director of STB-Philippines, said, "Singapore is host to three signature annual events celebrating our passion for food—the prestigious World Gourmet Summit (in April) and the Singapore Food Festival (in July). The third, of course, is Asia's largest international food and hospitality trade exposition, Food and Hotel Asia (in April)."

He said, through specially selected participating establishments, STB-P aimed to offer Filipinos a sampling of the cuisine that had become one of the major tourist draws of the island nation.

With its multi-ethnic population, Singapore cooking draws mainly from Chinese, Indian and Malay cuisine, with a sprinkling here and there of flavors from its Asian neighbors, Europe and the Americas, to satisfy practically everyone's craving. Dishes are either true to their ethnic origins or an exciting mix of two or more cultural influences.

Showcasing the authenticity or originality, and diversity, of Singapore cuisine are hawkers' markets, something like a street food court, where rows and rows of food establishments serve practically every dish Singapore offers.

Chang said, with the Must Try, lah! (*lah* is a typical Singaporean expression much like "e" or "kwan" in Filipino) promo's participating establishments, "...we offer a sampling of what Singapore has to offer to anyone who has yet to visit our island-nation. For our frequent visitors, here's an opportunity to satisfy that hunger until your next visit and... to win wonderful prizes (including the trip itself)."

Call 8130946.

Ask for recipes. . .

From page C1

¾ c palm sugar (Chef's Nook, tel. 7245812)

2 tbsp sugar

3 tbsp fish sauce

¼ c fine chili sauce, Lee Kum Kee

2 tbsp lime juice

1 c tamarind water (made by combining ¼ kg of tamarind paste (which is actually compacted raw, ripe tamarind, not the one that has been sweetened) and 2 c of warm water. Mash this with your hands. Strain to remove seeds. What you have extracted is tamarind water. You can buy tamarind paste from Chef's Nook or Lolita's in Farmers

Combine ingredients and mix well. Adjust sauce to your taste.

¼ c oil

3 tbsp shallots

2 tbsp chopped garlic

2 tbsp preserved radish for Phad Thai (optional, available at Chef's Nook)

½ kg shrimp, shelled, deveined, tails intact

2 tbsp dried shrimps (*hebi* or is it *hibe*? Heavy stuff! Whatever!) Remember get the class A. If not, just omit it or it will ruin your food! Soak in water, chopped

300 g Phad Thai noodles, soaked in water (Lolita's and Chef's Nook)

In a wok, heat oil. Saute shallots, garlic, radish, shrimps. Add noodles and sauce. Stir fry until noodles are cooked.

Toppings:

½ c fried *tokwa*, cubes

Egg strip (made from two beaten eggs with 2 tsp water cooked like a crepe on a pan. Roll egg crepe and slice into thin strips)

1/3 c roasted peanuts, chopped

½ c to 1 c fresh bean sprouts

Chives, sliced

Coriander for garnish

Top over noodles. Serve with condiments on the side.

Condiments:

Chili powder

Fresh sliced chilies

Sugar

Fish sauce

I am hosting an Arabian Nights party. Do you happen to know a belly dancer to perform and any suggestions on who could cater, with all the frills. It's for a 60th birthday.

MR. J. GOMEZ

The best I could suggest is Max Taljera. His things/frills are fantastic and he could even make a menu designed just for you. Call 8841692/94. As for the belly dancer, call Ivy at 0927-9909605.

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph

Bamboo and coconut husk cooking

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL OF Culinary Arts will conduct:

Aug. 4: Roast Beef Sandwich Buffet—Whole slab of US beef roasted to perfection, carved on the spot and served with flavored mustards; salad and condiment bar; freshly baked homemade breads and sweet rolls

Aug. 5: Kamameshi—Japanese Rice Casserole (all new), mixed, seafood, beef, chicken; bonus—Black Angus and Lobster Teppanyaki with dipping sauces

Aug. 7: Royal Indian Cuisine 1—Black Lentil Stew, Lamb Biryani (Indian style Paella-like dish), Baked Red Fish, Shrimp Palak (in spinach sauce), Butter Chicken, chutneys, lassi

Aug. 9: Bamboo and Coconut Husk Cooking (all new), From the Steamer to the Table—unusual one-dish meals (Steamed Chinese Sausage and Chicken Rice, Chicken and Salted Fish Rice in Bamboo, Prawn and Oyster Rice, Seasoned Coconut Steamed Rice); bonus—Deep-fried Shrimp Paste Baby Back Ribs

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162.

Best sellers

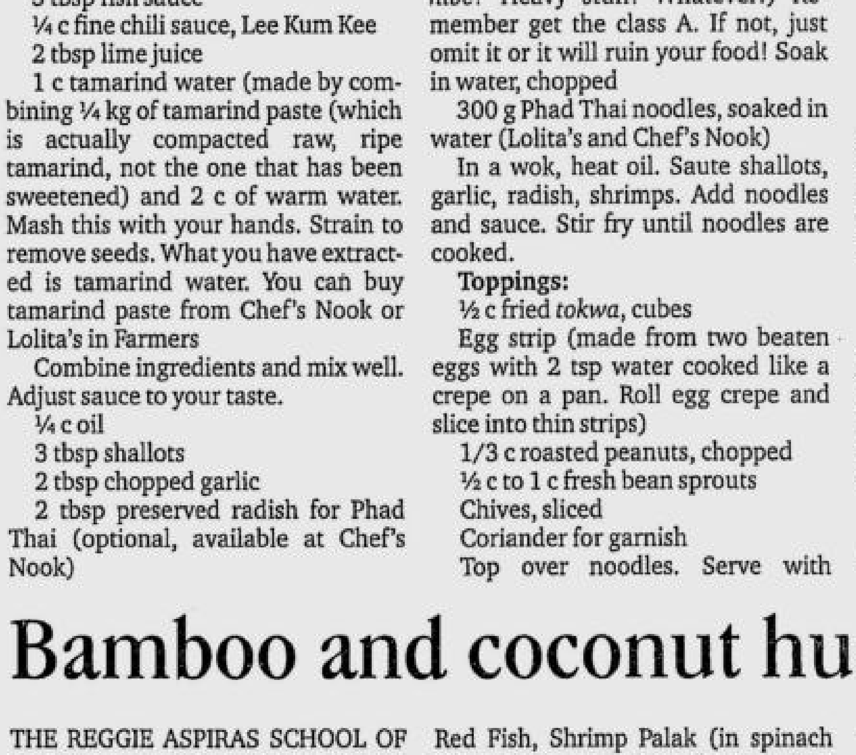
Maya Kitchen will hold classes on: "Sandwich Best Sellers", 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Aug. 5; and "Fundamentals of Bakery Production", 2-6 p.m., Aug. 8-11.

Call 8921185 or 8925011 loc. 108. Or send e-mail to mkitchen@ultimate.info.com.ph.

Comfort food

Dorothy's Cooking School, run by culinary expert and cookbook author Dorothy Ferreria, will conduct classes on Guests for Dinner and Comfort Food, Aug. 5; and Casseroles and Pasta, Aug. 9.

Call 7217735, 7217749 and 4167968.



ITALIANNI'S RESTAURANT introduces a new set of entrées and offers suggestions on wines to go with the dishes. Developed by Italianni's culinary team under new executive chef Junjun de Ocampo, they include Poached Salmon Fillet and the lightly coated Fish Fillet with Tomato, Capers and Olives, with Ruffino Orvietto Classico; battered Chicken Cacciatore in marinara-marsala sauce, with Ruffino Libaio Chardonnay; Stuffed Chicken Parmagiana with spicy marinara sauce and pan-seared Beef Tenderloin with Three Mushroom Sauce topped with assorted mushrooms in a creamy marsala sauce, red Chianti Ruffino.

CENTER FOR ASIAN CULINARY STUDIES
CAFÉ YSABEL RESTAURANT
455 P. Guevarra Street, San Juan, Metro Manila
Tel. Nos. 725-5089 / 726-9326
www.cafeysabel.com
Email: cafeysabel@mydestiny.net

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER SCHEDULE
RECREATIONAL AND ONE-DAY BUSINESS CLASS

BAKING CLASSES

August 04, Friday - CHOCOLATE TEMPTATIONS. This class is a must for anyone with a passion to create a dazzling chocolate desserts. Chef Adoree Chong-Uy will demonstrate a variety of specialties like Double Chocolate Rum Cake, Fudgy Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Blitz Torte, Flourless Chocolate Cake, Chocolate Peanut Butter Dome and Graham Chocolate Roulade for P1,800.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 11, Friday - CLASS FULL OF BROWNIES. Let's get ready for Christmas! For the novice baker, dessert lover and café owners, here is the class for you. Chef Junjun will show and teach you a variety of brownies namely: Traditional, Coffee Blond, Marble, White Chocolate, Chocochip Blondies and Strawberry Blondies. All ingredients are included for P1,500.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 pm.

August 15, Tuesday - CHEESECAKE CLASS. Delicious cheesecake from Pastry Chef - Instructor, Chef Hannah Herrera will be demonstrated in this class. The recipes are Cheesecake parfait, Low-Sugar Cheesecake, Light Cheesecake, Mocha & Choco-Chip Cheesecake, Caramel Pecan Cheesecake and Rich Oreo Cheesecake. Recipes include all ingredients for P1,800.00 from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

August 16, Wednesday - DELIGHTFUL CUPCAKES. The latest trend capturing everyone's fancy. Chef Junjun will show how to make Fudge Cupcakes, Peanut Butter Cupcakes, Mini FruitCakes, Sticky Nut Cupcakes and Butterscotch Banana Cupcakes for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

August 23, Wednesday - HOLIDAY BARS. Not Just for Christmas but every holiday with family and friends. Different bars with a twist. Santol Jam Squares, Fudge Filled Blondies, Piña Orange Bars, Green Tea Squares, Calamansi bars and Seven-up Squares for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

September 01, Friday - SUGAR-FREE & LOW SUGAR DESSERTS. Let Chef Junjun entice you with luscious but low calorie desserts. In his line up are the following Chocolate cake, Canonigo, Baked Cheesecake, Lemon Orange Chiffon Cake, Banana Cake and Bread Pudding. From 11:00 - 4:00 p.m. for P1,800.00 including all ingredients. NEW CLASS.

September 06, Wednesday - SPECIAL BARS. Learn a new set of delectable bar recipes from Chef Adoree Chong-Uy which are perfect for a home-based business. Recipes include Chocolate Raspberry bars, Date and Apple Squares, Sour Cream Streusel Bars, Sesame Squares, Almond Bars and Lemon Squares for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

September 07, Thursday - CLASS FULL OF BROWNIES 2. Whether Business or for the Home these original and great tasting brownies are also easy to make. Chef Junjun demonstrates Black Bottom Brownie with Pecans, Mint Brownies, Pistachio Brownies, Chocolate Rocks, White Chocolate-Macadamia Blondies and Fudgy Orange Liquer Brownies for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

September 09, Saturday - THE QUICHE CLASS. Pastry Chef - Instructor, Chef Hannah Herrera will be demonstrating classic pastry dough making in this Quiche Class. The recipes are Quiche Lorraine, Brie and Chive Quiche, Caramelized Onion and Feta Quiche, Roasted Bell Pepper Quiche and Smoked Salmon Quiche for P1,800.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS.

COOKING CLASSES

August 03, Thursday - PASTA IN A FLASH 2. Another 8 quick, easy and delightful pasta recipes in one short period. Recipes include Porcini with Cambozola Sauce, Roasted Walnut Gorgonzola Sauce, Truffle Scented Liver Sauce, Seafood with Hazelnut Butter Sauce, Scallop and Shrimp Saffron Sauce, Chorizo and Chicken Tomato Cream, Mushroom Pancetta in Olive oil, Chicken and Shrimp Pesto are recipes from Chef Gino. For P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 06, Sunday - KOREAN AND JAPANESE COOKING. Our Japanese Chef, Chef Hiromi Ogino will demonstrate to us two different Asian cuisines in one class. It will be Korean and Japanese cooking; the recipes are Kochujan (Chili Paste), Bechu Kimchi (Baguio Pechay Kimchi), Bibimbap (Beef and Vegetables Rice Topping), Pajon (Omelet Pan Cake), Kimchi Chige (Kimchi Hot Pot), Maguro Sashimi (Tuna Sashimi), Sukiyaki (Simmered Beef and Vegetables), Tempura (Deep Fried Shrimp and Vegetables) and Miso Shiru (Miso Soup) from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. For P1,800.00 including all ingredients. NEW CLASS.

August 07, Monday - FAST AND EASY COOKING 1. Chef Gino Gonzalez teaches you 8 quick, easy and delicious dishes that busy bodies can be proud of. Strictly for family and café friendly cooking! Recipes include Warm Pollunchay Salad; Clam Chowder; Baked Leek Tart; Shrimp Croquettes; Pasta Alfredo Sauce; Pinoy Sausage and Olive Pasta; Cumin Crusted Chicken Breast with Balsamic Reduction and Butter Tea Parfait with Lemon Custard Sauce for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 08, Tuesday - A TASTE OF VIETNAM 1. Learn delicious Vietnamese Cuisine from Nga Nguyen de Lemos, owner of Vietnamese Food House. Recipes include Pho Bo (Beef Noodle Soup), Goi Cuon (Fresh Springrolls with Shrimp and Pork), Pho Ap Chao (Fried Rice Stick noodles with Squid and Shrimps), Cha Ca Thang Long (Grilled Fish with Dill), Goi Rau Muong Thit Bo (Swamp Cabbage with Sautéed Beef Salad) and Che Bap (Sweet Corn with Coconut Milk) for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 09, Wednesday - FAST AND EASY COOKING 2. This is part two of Chef Gino's deliciously easy to prepare dishes. Eight good eating dishes include Chicken Garlic Butteryaki; Gino's Squid Ink Fried Rice; Korean Sliced Beef with Bulgogi Sauce; Sizzling Bistek Kabute; Chicken Mapo Beancurd; Chicken and Apple Sesame Fritter Salad; Curried, Corn and Pea Fritters with Tamarind Sauce and Asian Custard Fruit Salad for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 13, Sunday - KOREAN AND JAPANESE COOKING 2. A sequel to Chef Hiromi's Korean and Japanese cooking in one class, this time she will teach us how to make Oi Kimchi (Cucumber Kimchi), Chapche (Fried Noodles), Mantokk (Dumplings in Beef Soup), Kimbap (Rolled Rice), Gindara Teriyaki, Tofu Teriyaki, Yakitori (Chicken Barbeque), Gyoza (Pan-fried Dumplings) and Green Tea Tofu Shake from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. for P1,800.00 including all ingredients. NEW CLASS.

August 14, Monday - GIFTS FROM THE KITCHEN. Chef Gene prepares an array of Holiday gifts your friends will appreciate and that are easy to prepare even in the shortest possible time. Classic favourites such as Vela de Lomo, Gourmet Tuyo, Grilled White Cheese, Aceitunas Aliñadas, Dulong in Olive oil and Mufuletta. P1,500.00 from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m. Recipes include all ingredients.

August 17, Thursday - THE MEXICAN TABLE. Let Chef Gino Gonzalez captivate you with his Mexican dishes that is perfect for entertaining and it might even be your next food business. Recipes include Burrito, Cheese and Pepper Flautas, Fresh Salsa, Mango Salsa, Roasted Tomato Salsa, Carnitas, Prawns and Almond Sauce and Garbanzo and a bonus recipe of Sangria. The fee for this class is P1,800.00 including all ingredients from 11:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 18, Friday - ASIAN RICE & SNACKS. Chef Gene's Simple Asian Rice and Snacks recipes like Soft Spicy Rolls (Vietnam), Vietnamese Clay Pot Rice, Flying Red Dragon Shake, Bun Cha Hanoi, Gene's Eight Treasure Rice in Lotus Leaf, Petaling Clay Pot Chicken Rice (Malaysia) and Nasi Ikan Masin (Malaysia) will be demonstrated in this class for P1,800.00 from 10:00 - 2:00 p.m.

August 20, Sunday - DELICIOUS & HEALTHY SNACKS. Delicious and healthy snacks will be demonstrated by our Pastry Chef Hannah Herrera for us to enjoy and learn. The recipes are Whole Wheat Crackers, White Saltime Crackers, Black and White Healthy Crackers, Smoked Salmon Pate, Mushroom Pate, Basil pesto and Tomato-Basil Tapenade for P1,500.00 from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 21, Monday - A TASTE OF VIETNAM 2. A sequel to Chef Nga Nguyen de Lemos Vietnam cuisine for you to enjoy, the recipes are Cha Gio Tom (Fried Springroll with Shrimps), Goi Buoi Hai Sang (Pomelo Salad with Jellyfish), Ca Kho To (Caramelized Fish in Hot Pot), Banh Xeo (Vietnamese Omelette), Phoxao Bo (Sautéed Hofan with Beef and Kailan Leaves) and Cha Dau Xanh (Yellow Beans with Coconut Milk) for P1,500.00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. including all ingredients.

August 22, Tuesday - SAVORY CHEESECAKE. Cheesecakes are not only for Desserts. They can be delicious starters, a light meal or a main course such as Chef Gino original recipes of Waldorf Cheesecake; Muffuletta Cheesecake; Cheesecake Parmigiana; Smoked Ham, Artichoke and Feta Cheesecake; Pesto Cheesecake; No Bake Norwegian Salmon, Dill and Capers Cheesecake plus bonus recipes of Tomato Confit and Dalanghita Vinaigrette for P1,800.00 from 11:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 24, Thursday - COMMERCIAL AND HOME SIOPAO MAKING. Chef Gene gives simple and easy to make steamed Buns a touch for home and business. Recipes include Siopao Dough, Asado, Bola-bola (Pork and Chicken), Braised Pork (Lo Mah), Black Mongo Filling, Cuapao, Silver Spoon Bread, Kiamchay and Siopao Sauce for P1,800.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 3:00 p.m.

August 29, Tuesday - THAI FAVORITES 1. Bangkok Chef Chariya Thaikupt will teach her favorite Thai dishes like Tom Yam, Paad Thai, Chicken Pandan, Chicken Green Curry and Tako in Pandan leaves. P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

August 30, Wednesday - THAI FAVORITES 2. The recipes from Thai Chef Chariya Thaikupt are Tom Kha Talay, Bagoong Rice, Roasted Duck Curry, Crispy Catfish with Green Mango Salad, Thai Halo-halo at P1,500,00 from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. Recipes include all ingredients.

September 05, Sunday - SIMPLE & HEALTHY MEALS. People love and always want to eat light but still healthy food so here are recipes from Chef Hannah Herrera, our Pastry Instructor and formerly DOME Kitchen Manager. The recipes are Healthy Fritata, Lite Italian Sandwich, Chicken Sandwich Gourmet Style, 3 Kinds of Easy Pasta Sauces (Simple Carbonara, Meat Sauce and Healthy Basil Pesto) with a bonus of Assorted Spreads for P1,500.00 including all ingredients from 10:00 - 4:00 p.m.

WE WOULD APPRECIATE IF YOU COULD CALL AT LEAST TWO DAYS BEFORE THE CLASS FOR RESERVATION.

DIPLOMA IN PROFESSIONAL CULINARY ARTS PROGRAM

The Professional Culinary Arts Program prepares students for professional entry into the food service industry. This intensive program integrates classical and modern culinary techniques from the finest institutions abroad with kitchen management skills. Students learn how to prepare soups, sauces, vegetables, entrees, breads, pastries and desserts. They will learn how to identify, fabricate and portion meat, poultry, fish and shellfish. The course will also provide the introductory skills on Asian and Halal cooking, wine appreciation, gastronomy, table service and back of the house operations.

HIGHEST TESDA ACCREDITED PROGRAM. This program is a hands-on training series for students to gain proficiency in various skills needed to perform at professional standards in a commercial kitchen. The students will also prepare buffets and be involved in actual functions.

Learn the CACS method and be the Global Chef! Our program is the only school with its own restaurant outlet and its own internship program of 400 hours and Externship or an outside practicum program of 300 hours. It is also the only program with the mostly widely used software hospitality system worldwide that gives its graduates the global edge. Enrollment includes 3 sets of uniforms, chef's kit, manual and all the ingredients to be used. **NO HIDDEN COSTS!**

Classes will start on October. TTHS Schedule for 10:00 - 4:00 pm or 5:00 - 11:00 pm. Enrollment is ongoing. For inquiries and reservations, call 726-9326 or 725-5089 and look for Marilyn, [illegible] or Glady.

THE JAPANIZATION OF THE PINOY PALATE

Fast food, fresh food

FRESHLY caught and frozen in General Santos City, the tuna is shipped to Manila on the same day to be used for sushi and sashimi.

OF THE DIFFERENT cuisine in the Philippines, Japanese has remained one of the most popular.

Probably one reason for this was the introduction in 1985 of a novel Japanese dining experience that made more Filipinos familiar with Tonkatsu and Tempura.

The place was Tokyo Tokyo.

Now, more than two decades and almost 50 branches later, the company that launched the visually appealing "So Japanice" campaign is as strong as ever, helped no doubt by its ability to preserve the freshness and quality of its food even as it continued to grow.

Tokyo Tokyo offers a wide variety of Japanese food at affordable prices, some of the most popular being Beef Misono, Beef Teriyaki, Best Chicken Teriyaki and Salmon Belly Teriyaki.

Frequented by people wanting something other than burger-and-fries from a fast-food joint, Tokyo Tokyo is a favorite among families spending some quality time together, especially since the addition of Ice Desserts and Potato Balls.

Since the first Tokyo Tokyo restaurant opened at the Quad Carpark, the chain has sought to meet the changing needs and higher expectations of customers. At the same time, it left well enough alone its products that have proven to be winners, like the Red Iced Tea and other bestsellers on its menu.

The key to keeping customer loyalty is ensuring the freshness and high quality of food served. This is the crucial role of the state-of-the-art Tokyo Tokyo commissary.

Here shrimps and tuna, freshly caught and frozen in General Santos City and shipped to Manila on the same day, are prepared for the Sushi, Sashimi and Tempura.

Carefully cleaned hands make fresh egg noodles for Yakisoba; roll and wrap in *nori* (dried Japanese seaweed) vinegar-flavored rice for the Sushi; and slices of pork are marinated, breaded and fried for the Pork Tonkatsu.

"We can rightfully claim we have served about 20 million Shrimp Tempura since 1985. And the figure keeps rising," says Sheila Ramos, Tokyo Tokyo Inc. chair.

Tokyo Tokyo's commissary or central kitchen has a cheerful, cozy feel, probably due to light-colored walls and lots of natural light from huge windows.

The central kitchen is a symbol of Tokyo Tokyo's continuous pursuit of quality, as well as its commitment to fast, efficient and consistent service, affordability and innovation.

Tokyo Tokyo may be found in all major malls.

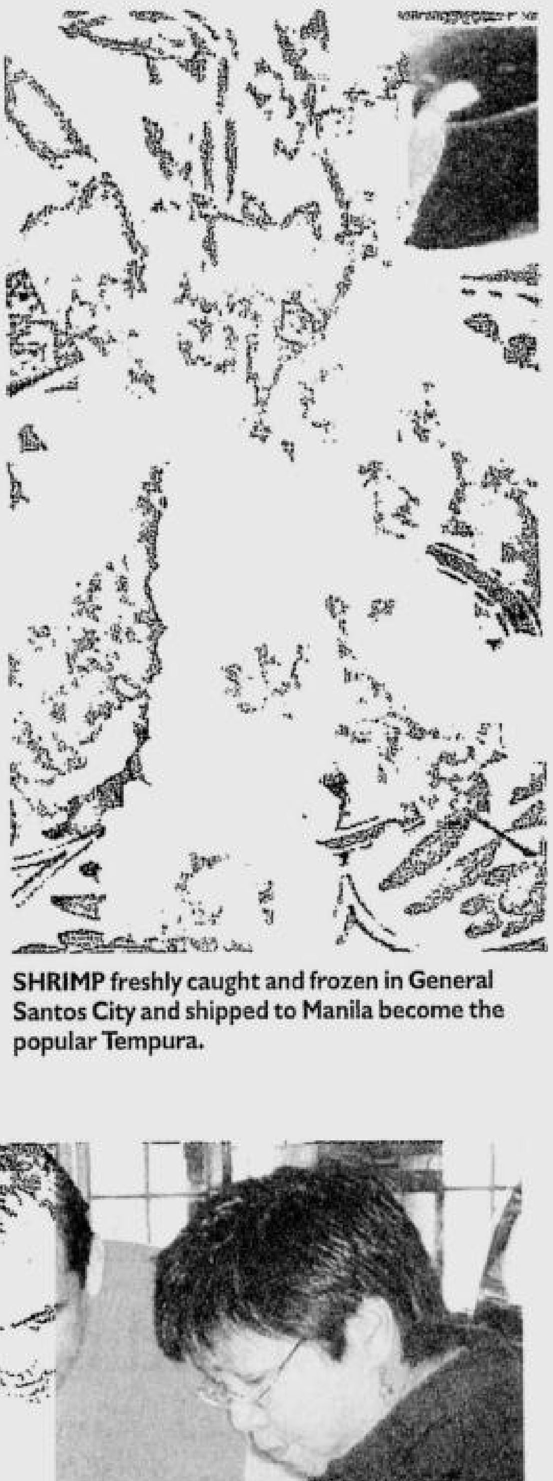
FROM SCRATCH. That's how egg noodle is made at the Tokyo Tokyo commissary. Noodles are cooked and served immediately.

TOKYO Tokyo's signature drink, the Red Iced Tea, is a special blend of premium tea with orange citrus.

HANDMADE egg noodles go into the Yakisoba, one of Tokyo Tokyo's best-sellers.

TOKYO
TOKYO

THE DISTINCTIVE sweet dark-brown Teriyaki sauce is made only from the freshest and most premium ingredients.



SHRIMP freshly caught and frozen in General Santos City and shipped to Manila become the popular Tempura.

A progress report on Kulinarya

COUNTRY COOKING

Micky Fenix

PROJECT KULINARYA WAS LAUNCHED two months ago. It aimed to trim the vast repertoire of Filipino recipes into very basic dishes. These dishes will constitute the menu for Filipino cooking that will be promoted both here and abroad.

At the launch, various groups involved in the project were introduced to the press. They were the Asia Society, Department of Tourism, San Miguel Corporation, Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines, Anvil Publishing, and the six chefs who would do the practical job of providing the recipes.

Those chefs—Glenda Barretto, Conrad Calalang, Margarita Fores, Myrna Segismundo, Jessie Sincioco and Claude Tayag—have been working together for about two months now. And they are nearing the final phase of the project.

Gold
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TESTER readying the ingredients for the *halo-halo*.

They decided on the dishes to be included and distributed those among themselves for the writing of the recipes and testing.

The hub of activity was the San Miguel Pure Foods office in Barrio Ugong, Pasig. Kitchen-testing and photography of the dishes were done there.

Two or more tests

Each dish was tested twice, in some cases even more if the result was not what was expected.

The initial test had chefs cooking the dishes themselves and presenting them for individual and family serving. Representatives of each group in the project assessed flavors and the plating. Food writers were also invited.

Other chefs, including expatriates, gave the perspective needed for the promotion of our dishes abroad.

It wasn't easy to go through a minimum of eight dishes per day even if a perfect *lechon* looked tempting and the soup was needed for the current rainy weather. At the tasting, every comment was recorded and discussed.

Some dishes were taken off the list because they either had complicated procedures or had ingredients that might not be available everywhere. New ones were then added.

The second testing was done by both professional and amateur cooks—the San Miguel chefs, testers from culinary magazines and students from culinary schools. It was important to know if the same results could be achieved.

It was decided that the second testing would take place on the same day that individual chefs had their dishes photographed. That way, the concerned chef would be around to taste the result and do any corrections where needed.

Corrections do happen because, when a material is too close, you don't see errors, the same way writers don't see typos. So, very often, the ingredient quantity is adjusted, procedures are added or a more detailed description put in.

When frying the *turon*, for instance, how deep should the oil be? What is the best substitute for the stone grinder used to grind the rice for *puto*?

Fruits of their labor

When the recipe comes out the way it's supposed to, it can be so gratifying for the chefs. I've seen their smiles as they taste what is literally the fruit of their labor.

Project Kulinarya took two years to get off the ground so you can understand the enthusiasm among the groups involved in it when it was finally launched.

Among the chefs, there was obvious camaraderie. While they were not expected to, they came to each other's photo session. Since the chefs did their own food styling, the other chefs would suggest extra touches.

MYRNA Segismundo, assisted by Raul Ramos, prepares the dishes to be photographed.

A row of eggs in the background added drama to the *leche flan*. Grated meat pouring out of a coconut lent some local color to the *kakanin* being shot.

For those of us watching the photography, there were lessons on how to present the dishes. There were tricks of the trade to get that look of freshness. Adding color to food that was generally brown didn't seem too difficult for the chefs.

This week, still more corrections and testing will be done. Photographs will be chosen for the manual that will contain the standard recipes. The next phase will be producing the manual, finishing the text, laying out and printing.

But the manual isn't the end result of Project Kulinarya. There will be the promotion in local restaurants and culinary schools. The chefs will be traveling throughout the country to demonstrate just how the recipes are done.

Project Kulinarya is the first effort to standardize Filipino recipes. But only some recipes. There is a need to continue the work, to document and standardize the variety and diversity of Filipino cooking.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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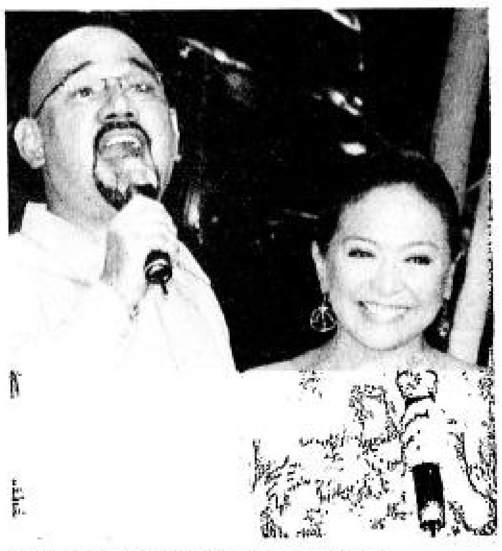
CHARO SANTOS-CONCIO

JUN "Dr. Love" BANAAG

KUYA CESAR



VIC de Leon Lima and Karen Davila

Pilots of the airwaves

Voice talents star as singers and dancers in a concert marking two decades of dzMM

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IT WAS AN UPHILL CLIMB FOR DZMM, SAID Peter Musngi, vice president for ABS-CBN's Manila Radio division.

When the AM station first went on air in July 1986, with radio legend Tiya Dely Magpayo on board, the station didn't even have a disc jockey's table in the makeshift studio hastily set up at the old Chronicle building in Ortigas Center.

(Trivia: Tiya Dely's was the last voice heard on air before the Lopez-owned station was padlocked by the martial law regime.)

For the former ABS-CBN employees who had regrouped, seeing the station revived was a matter of pride, Musngi said.

Spare parts

Among the veterans who had rejoined "Kapitan" Geny Lopez were Tiya Dely (who eventually move back to dzRH), the late Ernie Baron, Kuya Cesar and Musngi, who was a newly hired ABS-CBN employee in 1972.

"We made do with what we had, just so we could go on air," Musngi recalled. "We used an old unhinged door as table, on top of which we placed the radio equipment."

The equipment was another story.

After the Channel 4 studios were "liberated" in February 1986, Musngi recounted, "our engineers had to rummage through the garbage bin for spare parts they could still use."

It was the late Lito Balquiedra Jr., the station's first head, who had thought of the "MM" name. "It stood for *malayang mamamayan* (free citizen)," Musngi explained.

Again, with pride, Musngi related that in a little over a year, dzMM had overtaken the industry leader, to become the No. 1 radio station in late 1987.

"There are years when we didn't do as well, but we've consistently held the top slot for a longer time," Musngi said. "In the June 2006 Radioscope survey (conducted by AC Nielsen), dzMM again placed No. 1 in Mega-Manila, followed by dzRH and dzBB."

The timing of the "good news," Musngi pointed out, couldn't be more appropriate because the station is celebrating its second decade this year.

The station commemorated the milestone with a new jingle (sung by Sharon Cuneta) and a big concert held at the Araneta Coliseum last Saturday.

Musngi, Robert Labayen (vice president for Creative Communications) and composer Jessie Lazaten collaborated on the jingle.

The concert, entitled "20MM," featured the station's prime voice talents as singer/dancers—including Vice President Noli de Castro, Charo Santos-Concio, Korina Sanchez, Ted Failon, Juanito "Dr. Love" Banaag and "Kuya Cesar" Nucum.

Musngi performed a "Michael Bublé medley with Ariel Ureta and Joey Lina." Other concert highlights were Charo's "Till There Was You," VP Noli's "What A Wonderful World," Korina and Ted's Pinoy rock medley, Winnie Cordero's show-stopping numbers, and Vina Morales' dance showdown with Cory Quirino.

FROM left, Cory Quirino, Ted Failon and Alfredo Lim

KAYE Dacer

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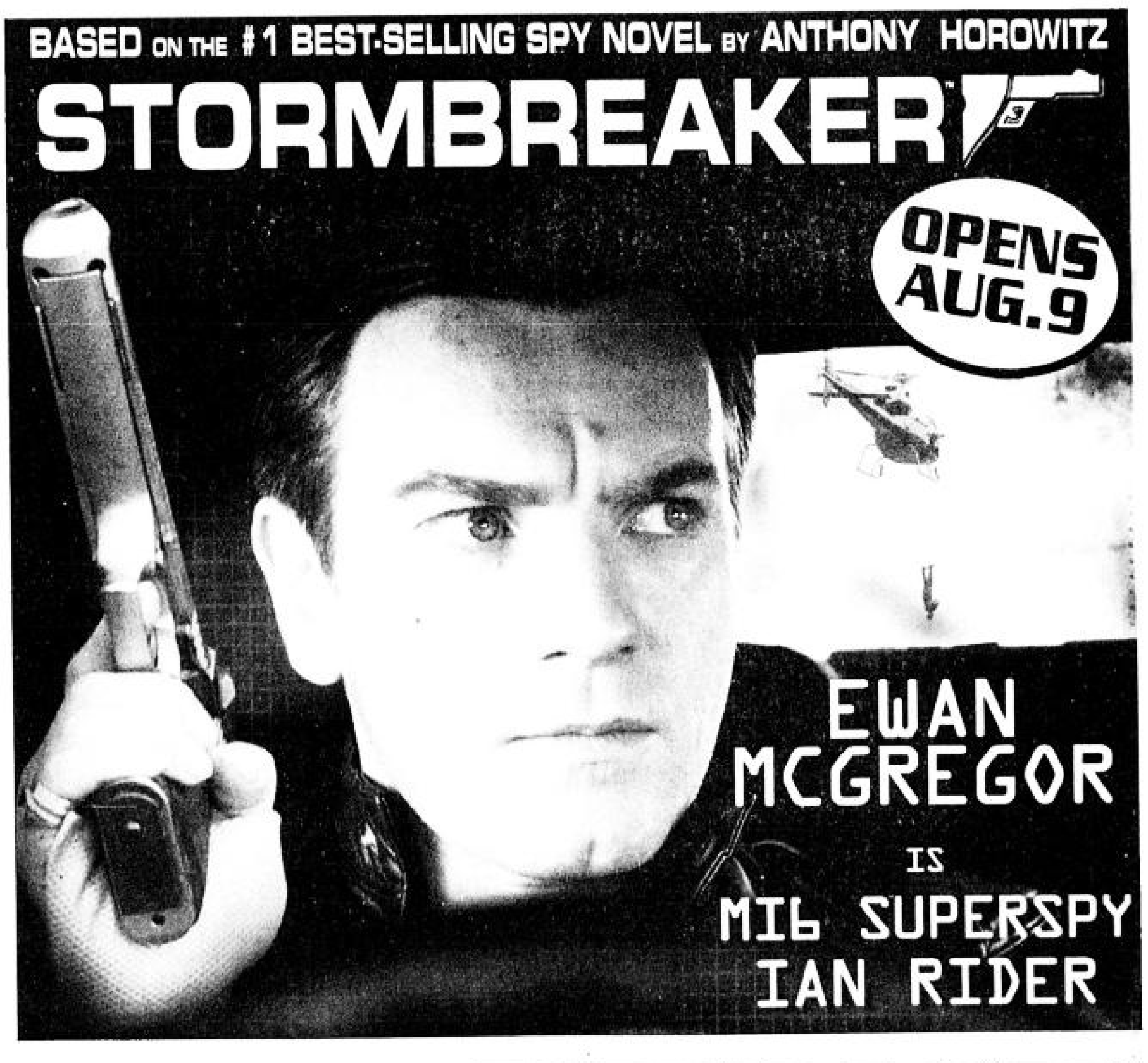

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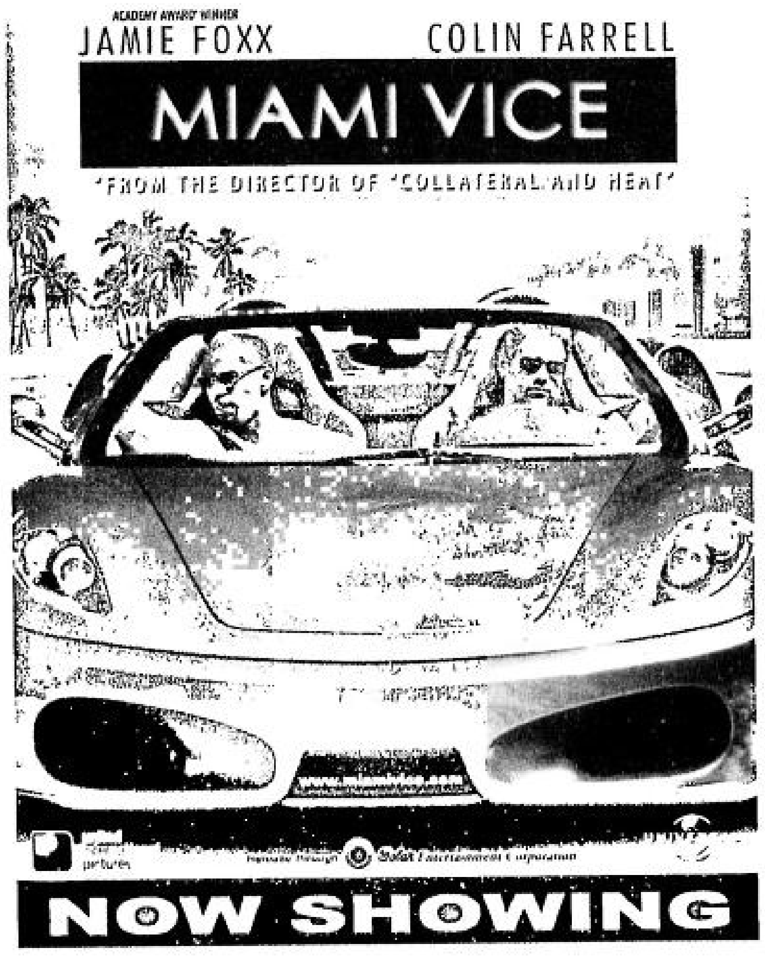

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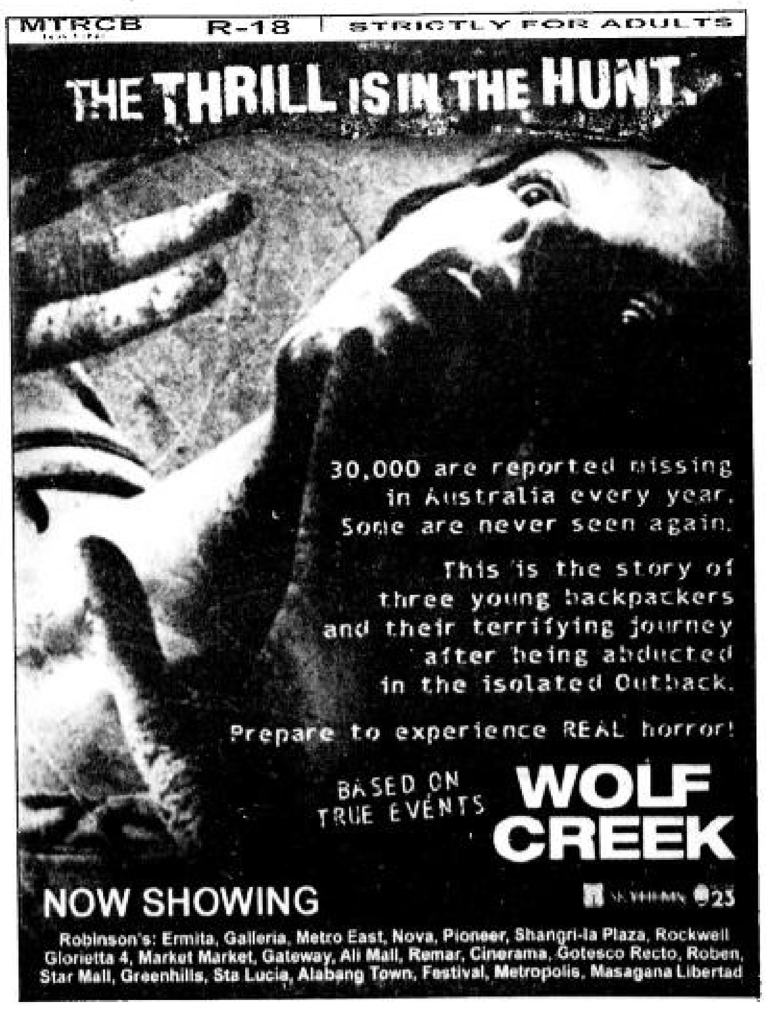

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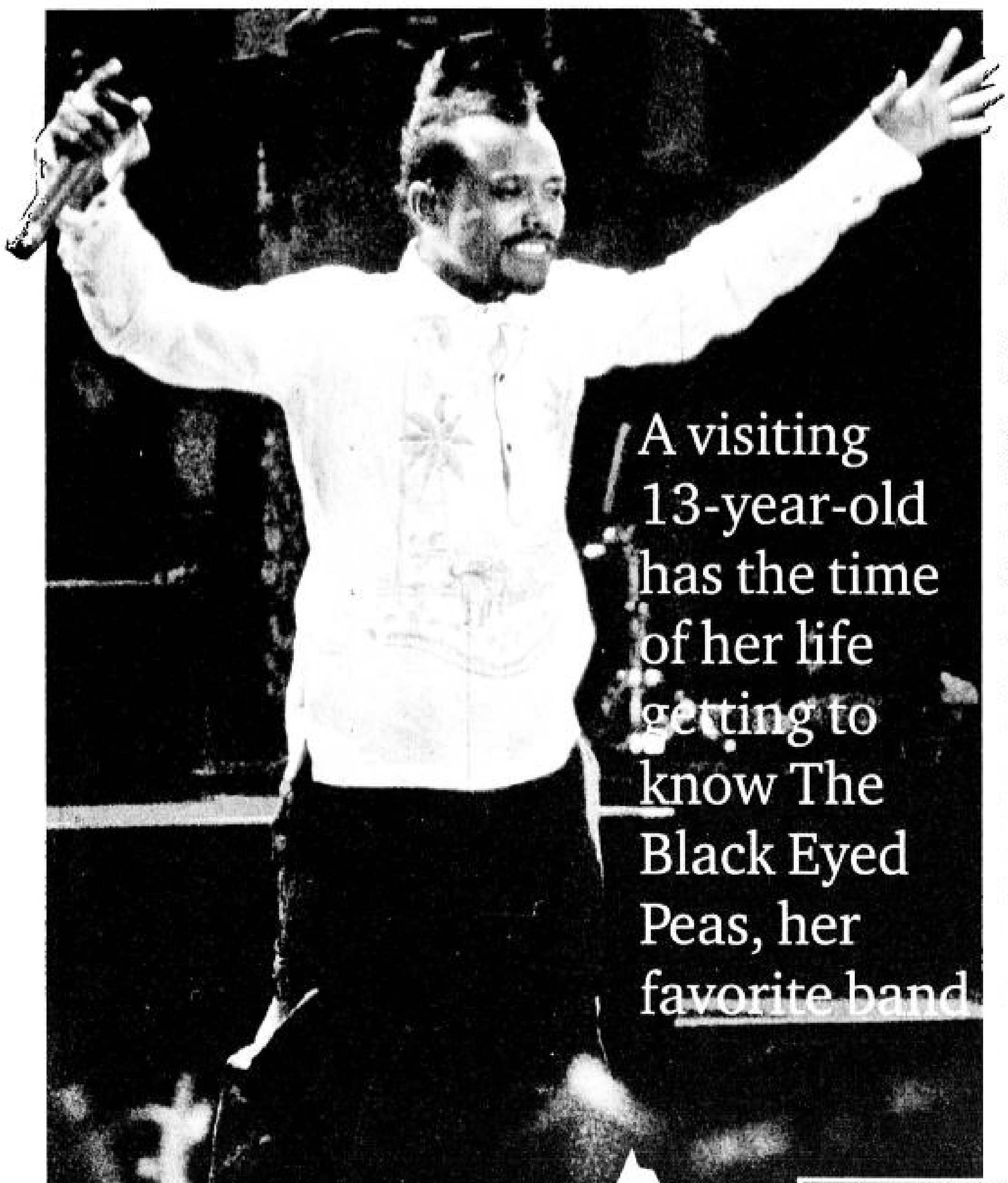


A visiting 13-year-old has the time of her life getting to know The Black Eyed Peas, her favorite band

KID FIT

APL in barong drives the audience wild. At right, BEP, band mates and friends

PHOTOS BY JIM GUIAO-PUNZALAN

By Mirella M. Deocadiz
Contributor

TWO DAYS THIS YEAR THAT I will always remember: July 26, when I interviewed the Black Eyed Peas, and July 27, when I saw them perform live, in concert!

I texted my friends back in Hong Kong to tell them I was going to the Peas' press con. They went crazy. We all love the band's unusual style, talent, energy and knack for making big hits. I have a classmate whose Mp3 player has nothing but BEP. At South Island School where I'm in year 10, people talk about the Peas often and sing their songs—proof that the band is massive there, too. When I go around in malls, BEP hits blast out of the stereos, a great change from canto pop.

On the 26th, a Wednesday, I was scared, excited and nervous all at once. I dashed through the doors of Shangri-la Plaza Edsa certain that I'd never make it— traffic had been horrible. But I was early because the Peas were late! I walked into the room and was bombarded with questions about my age. Some people thought it weird that a 13-year-old wanted to ask the Peas questions. A radio DJ told me it was cool, though. A little later, the emcee (the DJ who talked to me), announced that the Peas were coming.

When the band entered, I was just so overwhelmed. In my head I screamed, "Omigod, they're actually here!" I took out my camera, but a wall of photographers rose in front of me. I managed to take just a few blurry shots.

There was a short picture session, then it was question time.

How did they feel about success? The Peas said they felt blessed. Apl.de.ap said he felt good, especially because he's Filipino. Taboo's answer got everyone laughing: He said he can now buy shoes, and, in fact, has over 700 pairs!

I learned that there are days when they feel sick of performing certain songs. Taboo added that when he gets sick of performing, he goes out to buy another pair of shoes. (He's like a male version of Imelda Marcos!)

Another interesting thing that Apl said was that he cooks Filipino food while on tour! He calls the hotel staff for ingredients (eggs, rice ...), mixes everything and then eats it in his hotel room.

My turn

After the fifth question, I got to ask mine. (The MC said something like, "Now, a question from our 13-year-old reporter," which I found funny yet kind of annoying.) My question was, ""I heard you guys are working on separate projects. Are you splitting up?" Will.i.am said the Peas will never break up because they've been friends for so long (thank goodness!), but that they did have separate projects.

Fergie will release her first solo album, "The Duchess," under Will.i.am's label next month. Apl is doing a Pinoy hip hop record and Taboo is making a Latin record and appearing in a movie.

After the questions, the Peas were given a double-platinum award for their new album, "Monkey Business." Some of the sponsors gave the Peas some gifts and had photos taken with them. I couldn't get an autograph or a snapshot but that's okay. I had talked to them while practically just a meter away.

All told, the press con was nothing like I expected. I thought it would be frantic—everyone screaming at the Peas and photographers going crazy. This was because I talked to my mom earlier and she told me to be aggressive, to get my questions answered. Actually, it was so organized, even kind of quiet. All I had to do was raise my hand to ask my question. Easy! The Peas were also really funny and relaxed. My sister kept telling me to calm down and stop giggling but I couldn't. I was having so much fun.

The concert the next day was amazing. It felt weird seeing the guys onstage, after meeting them up close only 24 hours ago, when they were so relaxed. On stage, they were crazy and tireless, and kept the audience on its feet. Everybody was dancing, screaming and cheering. I had to stop and catch my breath after a few songs.

Apl came out in a *barong* and sang in Tagalog; the rest of the band yelled, "Filipino! Filipino!" which made the crowd wild. Apl sang "Bebot," and it was chaos. He taught the crowd a quick dance routine, which was incredible! I saw celebs in the audience with massive smiles on their faces.

Everything about the concert was just magic, including the incredible sets and the audience. I would have been so upset if I hadn't gone to see BEP perform. The only downside was that my feet hurt after, and there was this buzzing sound in my ears. But really, it was all worth it.

Cesar to make Ninoy biopic

By Nini Valera

Maricel Soriano has agreed to play the part of Cory

CESAR MONTANO IS PRODUCING Ninoy Aquino's bio-pic under his own CM Films.

The actor, who will also play the part of the slain senator, told INQUIRER Entertainment that he had already talked to former President Cory Aquino about the movie.

"She's very excited," Cesar said. "Her only concern is how we will treat Ninoy's assassination. We'll show her the story board for that scene."

Fees for the movie rights have not been discussed. "It was not brought up during our talk," Cesar said. "But I'm sure there will be no problem."

Cesar said filming starts in January next year. He has invited investors, he said, since it is a big project.

He has chosen Marilou Diaz-Abaya to direct the film.

"It's been a while since we last worked together," said Cesar. "We last did 'Bagong Buwan.' She's the only director I can think of who will be perfect for the Ninoy movie."

First scene

Cesar said Ricky Lee and a US-based writer will do the screenplay, with the latter doing the part of Ninoy's life in Boston, where the senator settled with his family after undergoing a heart bypass surgery in 1980.

Cesar said the movie will most likely begin with the assassination at the airport, which has since been renamed Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"That's the pivotal point of the story," he said. "It would be flashbacks from that point on."

Cesar said Maricel Soriano, whom he starred with in a TV sitcom, has agreed to play the part of Cory. She describes Maricel as "a very good actress" who can "give justice to the role."

No Kris

Kris Aquino, Ninoy's youngest child, has turned down a part, according to Cesar.

But Cesar has to first complete the digital film "Reunion," of which he is actor, writer, director and producer.

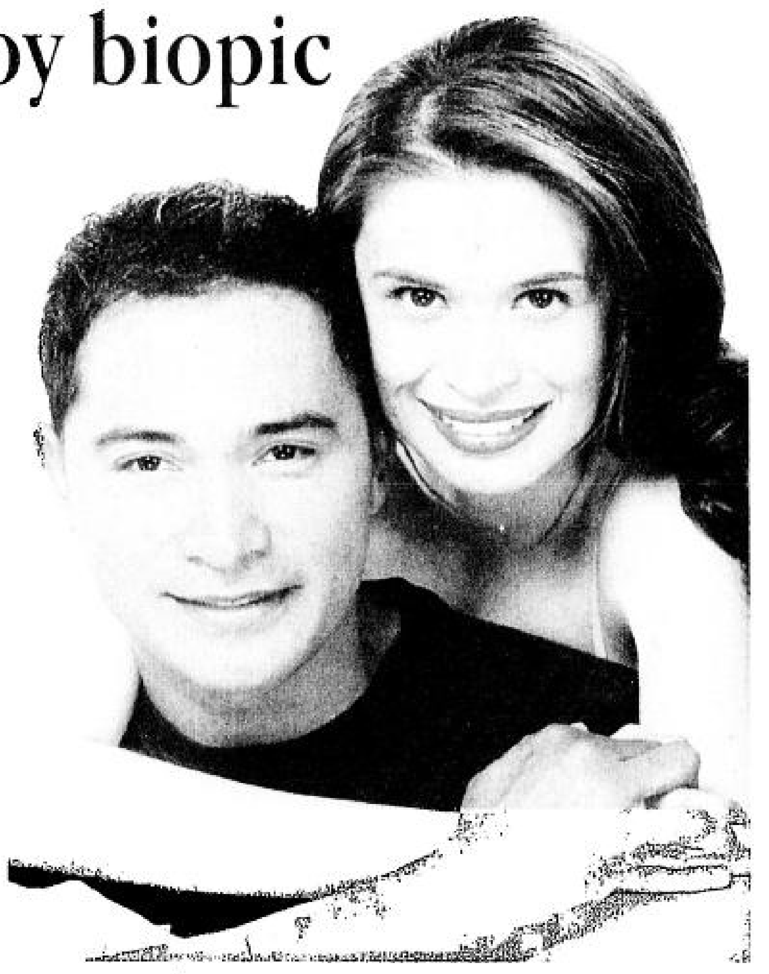
"The movie is a comedy and was not expensive to produce," said Cesar, who admitted that he still has to recoup his investment in the 2004 film "Panaghoy sa Suba."

"Reunion" is in its post-production stage and may have a September playdate, he said.

While his Hollywood career has not taken off, Cesar said, he's not giving up. He appeared in Miramax Films' "The Great Raid" and got good reviews for his role as the guerilla leader Juan Pantoja.

"I have to be patient, but I'm optimistic that there's a Hollywood role for me," he said.

He said he has been called to an audition by Sony Pictures.



Sunshine 'more secure' now

SUNSHINE CRUZ ADMITTED that, two years ago, her bouts of jealousy had shaken her marriage to Cesar.

"I'm more secure now," she told INQUIRER Entertainment. "I was jealous of the women linked to him at that time because I was pregnant. I feel so ugly when I'm pregnant."

The Montanos have three daughters. Sunshine gave birth to the youngest just over a year ago, but she has such a tiny waist, she (and Cesar) recently landed an endorsement deal with Calayan Surgi Center.

"I need to maintain what I have," she said. "I can't just let myself go."

As for Cesar, Sunshine said: "I couldn't ask for more."

3rd Golden Screen Awards set Aug. 30

By Nini Valera

THE ENTERTAINMENT PRESS Society (Enpress) has set its 3rd Golden Screen Awards on Aug. 30 at the Music Museum.

Ruel Mendoza, Enpress president, said all indie/digital movies were considered for the awards.

"Blue Moon," directed by Joel Lamangan, bagged 12 nominations, including Best Motion Picture-Dama, Best Actor (Eddie Garcia), Best Actress (Jennylyn Mercado), Best Supporting Actor (Dennis Trillo), Best Supporting actress (Boots Anson-Roa) and Best Director.

The indie films "Ang Pagdadalaga Ni Maximo Oliveros" and "Ilusyon" got nine nominations each.

"La Visa Loca" took seven nominations, including Best Motion Picture-Musical or Comedy, Best Actor (Robin Padilla), and Best Actress (Rufa Mae Quinto).

Nathan Lopez was nominated for Breakthrough Performance by an Actor for "Maximo." Soliman Cruz and Ping Medina got nods in the same movie for Best Supporting Actor.

Yul Servo has a Best Actor nomination and Jaycee Parker, Breakthrough Performance by an Actress, for "Ilusyon."

The recipient of the Lino Brocka Lifetime Achievement Award is award-winning actor-writer-director Mario O'Hara.

Other nominees include:

Motion Picture Drama—"Dubai," Star Cinema Productions; "Exodus," Imus Productions/Reality Films; "Mulawin: The Movie," GMA Films and Regal Entertainment; "Nasaan Ka Man," (Star).

Motion Picture Musical or Comedy—"Ako Legal Wife," Regal; "Bikini Open," Seiko Films; "Can This Be Love," Star.

Motion Picture Independent/Digital—"Ala Verde Ala Pobre," Muchachos Bravos Filmworks; "Ang Daan Patungong Kalimugtong," Sampay Bakod Productions; "Ang Pagdadalaga Ni Maximo Oliveros," ufo Pictures; "Ilusyon," Digital Viva; "Mga Pusang Gala," Erasto Films/MLR Films; "Pepot Artista," (Buruka Films).

Actress in a Lead Role-Drama—Irma Adlawan, "North Diversion Road"; Ana Capri, "Ala Verde Ala Pobre"; Jaclyn Jose, "Sarung Banggi"; Jennylyn Mercado, "Blue Moon"; Meryll Soriano, "Room Boy."

Actor in a Lead Role-Drama—Carlo Aquino, "Sa Aking Pagkagising Mula sa Kamulatan"; John Arcilla, "North Diversion Road"; Ricky Davao, "Mga Pusang Gala"; Eddie Garcia, "Blue Moon"; Aga Muhlach, "Dubai."

Color It Red grows up but, hey, it still rocks

SPIN CITY

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

AS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR ACTS IN the '90s rock scene, Color It Red distinguished itself as a warm and socially conscious female-fronted local band that knew how to channel emotion and concern without having to resort to kitschy gimmicks or trendy novelty songs. Their lyrics were distinctly literate, their music mostly anthemic, constantly steered by singer Cooky Chua's unswerving, powerful voice.

Twelve years after their debut album, "Hand-painted Sky," the band is still characteristically very listen-able, while remaining as lyrically and musically adventurous as ever. This is evidenced by their fourth self-titled studio album, which may take time to grow on old CIR followers.

The new lineup feels like a combination of the more experimental, more playful pop-rock numbers in the group's second album "Fool's Circle," and the jazz-inspired material in their third album, "Pop Fiction." Chua sounds sultrier and more relaxed, depending on the requirements of the song, but the mellower ones don't diminish her strong-female-rocker edge at all.

She's still convincing in both English and Filipino, and trades the more youthful and angst-filled persona for a wiser, more candid survivor of heartbreak in many of the 13 tracks. There isn't unnecessary sap in the more optimistic songs, embodied by the sisterly perspective of "Speak to Me," the positive outlook of "Dalawa," and the life-loving and content person in "You." Color It Red's members seem to have grown up, collectively, if the lyrics are any indication.

"Stay," meanwhile, sounds like it was musically influenced by Edie Brickell's "Picture Perfect Morning," but it's uniquely a sweet, poignant and bluesy piece about a lover's desperation.

But they haven't entirely ditched the heavier subject matter and angst. There's "Sweet Freedom," which depicts a war-weary Philippines after the Spanish rule, and the deceptively bouncy but acerbic "From the Other Side of the Sea," about overworked laborers.

Perhaps the most unusual number is "Panalo," an ode to pot-smoking, which also has a "radio edit version" as the bonus track. It won't be everyone's cup of tea, but Chua does make it sound alluring.

While older fans will miss the deeper, sexier and more carefree material from Color It Red's early years, this latest offering offers a more eclectic selection that caters to a wider range of listeners. CIR devotees and new listeners will still get a kick out of the album, which firmly reestablishes the band as a one of the more talented and resilient musicians of their generation.

Plutonic relationship, bedwinner and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: WHY DID YOU decide to become a singer and actor?

Guest: I had no choice. I didn't finish high school, but I had to earn money, because I am the bedwinner of our family.

(We fervently hope you've won a lot of—beds!... And we won't ask you how you did it.)

* * *

Host: How long did it take for you not to be so nervous in front of the cameras?

Guest: I was really nervous at first, but I learn to relax after sometimes.

(*Ay*, after sometimes!)

* * *

Host: What advice do you want to give all the parents of young children out there?

Guest: The best to do is, *ating* kids, *bigyan natin ng kulang pansin.*

(*Kulang?* *Mali. Kaukulang—tama.*)

* * *

Host: To all of your enemies, what is your message?

Guest: They will not succeed in bringing us down! They never stop thinking of ways to destroy our country and our people—and neither do we!

(Oops, straight from the mouths of politicians!)

* * *

Host: You're such a beautiful girl, many guys must be after you. Do you have a boyfriend?

Guest: No, but I admit, I have many shooters.

(Shooters? With guns?—Oh, you mean *suitors*. What a relief.)

* * *

Host: How did the criminals escape after the shootout?

Guest: According to the police, *Kinomander* and jeep.

Kinomander, commander? You must

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1	SUKOB	11:35, 2:05, 4:35, 7:05, 10:00	PG-13
2	MIAMI VICE	11:20, 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10	R-13
3	THE ANT BULLY	11:40, 1:55, 4:10, 6:25, 8:40, 10:55	GP
4	THE BREAK-UP	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00	R-13

"MIAMI VICE" TRIVIA PROMO

Answer the "Miami Vice" trivia questions in our daily movieguide. Cut and drop entries at any Robinsons Movieworld branch on or before August 16. Winners will get any of the following:

- *Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila Gift Certificate*
- *Gift packs from Solar-UIP*
- *Robinsons Gift Certificate*

**winners will be notified via registered mail only.*

Tune in to Wave 89.1 to win free movie invites.

Wave 89.1 "MIAMI VICE" Car Stick-On

Drive by Robinsons Malls and get a limited "Miami Vice" sticker and other exciting giveaways.

JULY 29 (Saturday) 3:00-6.00PM
(Robinsons Metro East Driveway)

AUGUST 05 (Saturday) 3:00-6:00PM
(Robinsons Pioneer Driveway)

showing at ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD on AUGUST 02

JAMIE FOXX
COLIN FARRELL
MIAMI VICE
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www.miamivice.com

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

SUKOB PG 1:15,3:25,5:35,7:45,10:00	MIAMI VICE R13 1:50,4:40,7:30,10:20	ANT BULLY G 1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:05
JUST MY LUCK G 12:50,3:10 BREAK-UP R13 5:30,7:50,10:10	WOLFCREEK R18 2:50,5:10,7:30,9:50	MIAMI VICE R13 2:20,5:10,8:00

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-144041
MATINEE PHP 111.00 – SCREENINGS BEFORE 5:00 PM – MONDAY-FRIDAY

SHANG CINEPLEX

① MIAMI VICE MTRCB R-13 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
② ANT BULLY MTRCB. GP 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
③ SUKOB MTRCB PG-13 12:20, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40
④ WOLF CREEK MTRCB R-18 1:20, 3:30, 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
PREMIERE THEATRE THE BREAK-UP MTRCB R-13 12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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SUKOB 12:55 / 3:05 / 5:15 / 7:25 / 9:35
ANT BULLY 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00
WOLF CREEK 12:50 / 3:05 / 5:20 / 7:35 / 9:50
JUST MY LUCK 2:15 / 4:45 / 7:15 / 9:45
TAMARA 2:00 / 4:20 / 6:40 / 9:00
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 12:50 / 3:50 / 6:50 / 9:50
THE BREAK - UP 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40
PLATINUM CINEMA MIAMI VICE 12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

ALIMALL 5
MIAMI VICE 12:05 R4 / 2:05 / 5:05 / 8:05
SUKOB 12:10 R2 / 2:00 / 4:10 / 6:20 / 8:30
ANT BULLY 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00
WOLF CREEK 12:05 R3 / 1:40 / 3:55 / 6:10 / 8:25
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2 12:10 R3 / 2:30 / 5:30 / 8:30
DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM
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2pm UP vs UE (Srs) / 4pm ADMU vs UST (Srs)
INXS : SWITCH ON MANILA TOUR
August 15, Tuesday - 8:00 pm

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-La Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City Telephone 633 2227 · 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) MIAMI VICE
2 (DOLBY) ANT BULLY
3 (DOLBY) SUKOB
4 (DOLBY) WOLF CREEK
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) THE BREAK-UP

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4234 / 816.4216
1 ANT BULLY
2 THE BREAK UP
3 SUKOB
4 MIAMI VICE

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 MIAMI VICE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) SUKOB
5 WOLF CREEK

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 WOLF CREEK
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
4 ANT BULLY

SM THEATRES
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
3 LADY IN THE WATER
3 SUKOB

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
SUKOB
LADY IN THE WATER
RESERVED
RESERVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 SUKOB
2 THE BREAK UP
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 ANT BULLY
5 MIAMI VICE
6 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN-2
7 SUKOB
8 LADY IN THE WATER
9 WOLF CREEK
10 TAMARA

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) SUKOB
2 (DOLBY) ANT BULLY
3 (DOLBY) MIAMI VICE
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) MIAMI VICE
2 WOLF CREEK
3 SUKOB
4 ANT BULLY
5 TAMARA

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SPL
2 SUKOB
3 JUST MY LOCK
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SUKOB
2 WOLF CREEK
3 WILD ORCHID-2

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
2 NACHO LIBRE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 ANT BULLY
2 SUKOB
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 LOVEWRECKED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2
2 THE FAST & THE FURIOUS

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) SUKOB
2 (DOLBY) MIAMI VICE
3 (DOLBY) THE ANT BULLY
4 (DOLBY) THE BREAK-UP

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 NACHO LIBRE
2 SUKOB
3 LADY IN THE WATER
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 NACHO LIBRE
2 LADY IN THE WATER
3 SUKOB
4 WILD ORCHEDS

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 CHAOS
2 LADY IN THE WATER
3 SUKOB
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN - 2

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plandel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 NACHO LIBRE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 SUKOB
2 LADY IN THE WATER

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
2 I WANNA BE HAPPY

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 THE NUN
2 HUBAD NA MULTO
3 BUKID AY BASA
4 I WANNA BE HAPPY

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 SUKOB
2 SAPLOT
3 LADY IN THE WATER
4 AMERICAN SOLDIERS
5 NACHO LIBRE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 THE NUN
4 NACHO LIBRE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 WHITE LADY
2 BUKID AY BASA

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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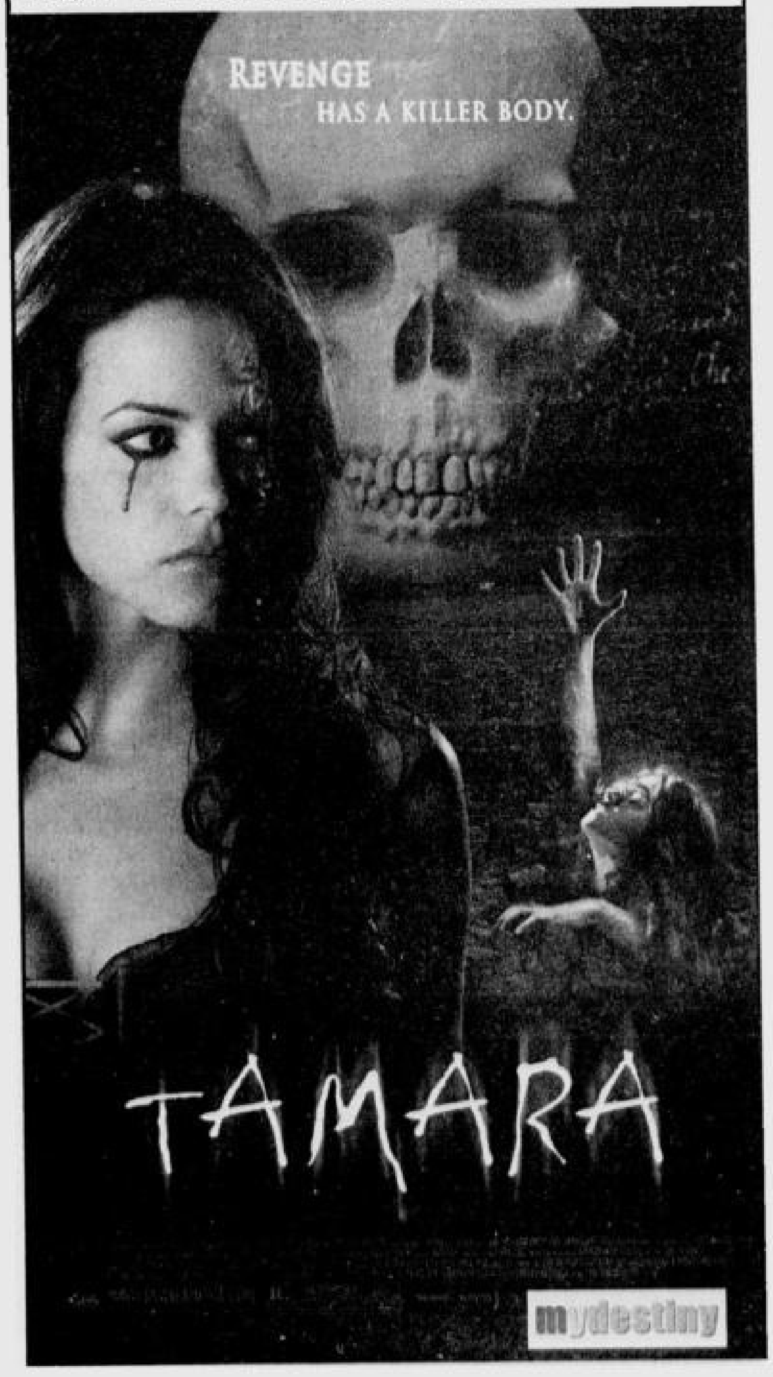

REVENGE HAS A KILLER BODY.
TAMARA
mydestiny

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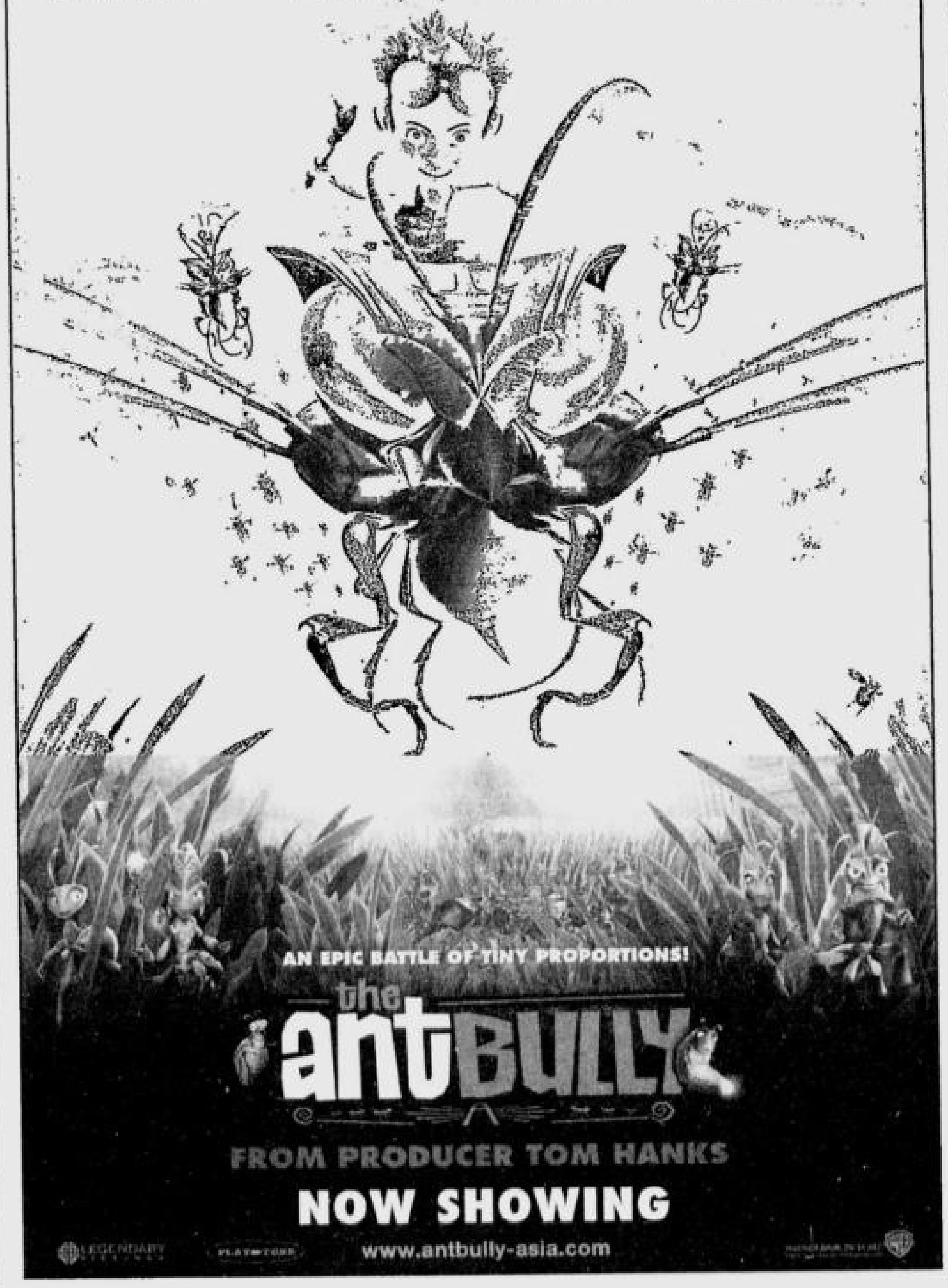

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

CINEMA ACCESS
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FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA 632-9116

1 THE BREAK-UP • THX
2 MIAMI VICE
3 WOLF CREEK
4 TAMARA
5 ANT BULLY
6 JUST MY LUCK
7 LADY IN THE WATER
8 SUKOB
9 SUPERMAN RETURNS
10 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

ERMITA 636-7809 to 12

1 MIAMI VICE
2 SUKOB
3 TAMARA
4 WOLF CREEK
5 ANT BULLY
6 THE BREAK-UP
7 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE BREAK-UP
2 MIAMI VICE
3 SUKOB
4 ANT BULLY
5 WOLF CREEK
6 LADY IN THE WATER
7 JUST MY LUCK
8 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 MIAMI VICE
2 WOLF CREEK
3 ANT BULLY
4 SUKOB

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS 3
2 SUKOB
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 SUKOB
2 MIAMI VICE
3 ANT BULLY
4 WOLF CREEK

"MIAMI VICE" TRIVIA PROMO

Answer the "Miami Vice" trivia questions in our daily movieguide. Cut and drop entries at any Robinsons Movieworld branch on or before August 16. Winners will get any of the following:

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- *Robinsons Gift Certificate*

**winners will be notified via registered mail only.*

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JULY 29 (Saturday) 3 00-6 00PM
(Robinsons Metro East Driveway)
AUGUST 05 (Saturday) 3 00-6.00PM
(Robinsons Pioneer Driveway)

JAMIE FOXX
COLIN FARRELL
MIAMI VICE

showing at
ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD
on AUGUST 02

STA. ROSA (049) 837-0907

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 WILD ORCHID 2
3 SUKOB
4 LADY IN THE WATER

LIPA (043) 757-3664 (043) 312-5870

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 SUKOB
3 THE NUN
4 LADY IN THE WATER

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332

1 TAKE THE LEAD
2 SUKOB
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 LOVE WRECKED

ANGELES (045) 892-2348

1 ANT BULLY
2 LOVE WRECKED
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 SUKOB
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
3 ANT BULLY
4 LOVE WRECKED

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 961-5270

1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
2 ANT BULLY
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE
5 THE COOLER
6 KISS KISS BANG BANG

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0459

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 UNITED 93
4 AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
5 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN 2
6 SPL

ILOILO (033) 336-8070

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 SUKOB
3 UNITED 93
4 WILD ORCHID 2

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SM MALL OF ASIA 556-0104

SAN MIGUEL Coca-Cola IMAX THEATRE
ANT BULLY
11:00AM 1:00PM 3:00PM 5:00PM 7:00 PM
SUPERMAN RETURNS
9:00PM
PREMIERE CINEMA
SUKOB
DIRECTOR'S CLUB
MIAMI VICE
CENTERSTAGE
RESERVED

1 MIAMI VICE
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 ANT BULLY
4 TAMARA
5 SUKOB
6 JSUT MY LUCK

THE PODIUM
CINEMA 1
MIAMI VICE
CINEMA 2
ANT BULLY
633-8976

SM CITY SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 ANT BULLY
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 SUKOB
4 MIAMI VICE
5 JUST MY LUCK
6 THE BREAK-UP
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
8 TAMARA
9 CAVITE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 ANT BULLY
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
4 MIAMI VICE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 JUST MY LUCK
3 ANT BULLY
4 MIAMI VICE
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
6 NACHO LIBRE
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
8 TAMARA
9 SUKOB
10 SUKOB
11 CAVITE
12 THE BREAK-UP

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 CAVITE
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
5 THE BREAK-UP
6 SUKOB
7 MIAMI VICE
8 ANT BULLY
9 WHITE LADY
10 LADY IN THE WATER
11 SUKOB
12 JUST MY LUCK

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 MIAMI VICE
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 ANT BULLY
4 JUST MY LUCK
5 SUKOB
6 WHITE LADY
7 SUPERMAN RETURNS
8 CAVITE
9 TAMARA
10 THE BREAK-UP

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 ANT BULLY
2 MIAMI VICE
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
4 THE BREAK-UP
5 JUST MY LUCK
6 SUKOB

SM NORTH EDSA 929-5452

THE BLOCK
1 ANT BULLY
2 SUKOB
3 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
4 MIAMI VICE
5 SUKOB
6 ANT BULLY
7 MIAMI VICE
8 TAMARA
9 CAVITE
10 JUST MY LUCK
11 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
12 THE BREAK-UP

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 TAMARA
2 SUPERMAN RETURNS
3 CAVITE
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
5 ANT BULLY
6 MIAMI VICE
7 SUKOB
8 THE BREAK-UP
9 WHITE LADY
10 SUKOB
11 LADY IN THE WATER
12 JUST MY LUCK

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 JUST MY LUCK
2 SUKOB
3 LOVEWRECKED
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 JUST MY LUCK
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 JUST MY LUCK
2 MIAMI VICE
3 SUKOB
4 ANT BULLY

EXCLUSIVE

FRESH NEW MOVIE

Watch it! Exclusively at SM Cinema

Ryan Agoncillo is Paolo Santillian, a young free-spirited man who suddenly gives himself into depression when he lost his big break in filmmaking and when he saw his girlfriend with another man. But he never gave up on love when he met a beautiful girl named Lynette. What follows is an unforeseeable twist proving that love has its many mysterious ways.

umaaraw , umuulan

Starring Ryan Agoncilo, Precious Lara Quigaman and Herbert Bautista
A Story by Luigi Santiago
Directed by Richard Arellano

OPENS AUGUST 9 EXCLUSIVELY AT SM CINEMA
Cebu, Clark, Davao, Fairview, Mall of Asia, Manila, Megamall, North EDSA, Pampanga, Southmall, Sta. Mesa

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39

1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 CHAOS
3 NACHO LIBRE
4 SUKOB

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 JUST MY LUCK
2 SUKOB
3 THE NUN
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 JUST MY LUCK
3 MIAMI VICE
4 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
5 ANT BULLY
6 SUKOB
7 WHITE LADY
8 SUPERMAN RETURNS

LUZON

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 CHAOS
2 SUKOB
3 LADY IN THE WATER
4 THE NUN

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 TAKE THE LEAD
3 RV
4 SUKOB

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 ANT BULLY
2 LOVEWRECKED
3 SUKOB
4 LADY IN THE WATER
5 CAVITE
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85

1 SUKOB
2 ANT BULLY
3 CAVITE
4 WHITE LADY
5 SUKOB
6 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 SUKOB
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 JUST MY LUCK
4 LADY IN THE WATER

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66

1 NACHO LIBRE
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 SUKOB
4 LADY IN THE WATER

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 SUPERMAN RETURNS
2 ANT BULLY
3 LOVEWRECKED
4 LADY IN THE WATER
5 CAVITE
6 SUKOB
7 SUKOB
8 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 RESERVED
3 SUKOB
4 UNITED 93
5 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
6 BATAS MILITAR
7 RESERVED
8 NACHO LIBRE

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
2 NACHO LIBRE
3 SUKOB
4 CAVITE
5 SUKOB
6 AMERICAN HAUNTING

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 LADY IN THE WATER
2 PIRATES OF CARIBBEAN
3 SUKOB
4 NACHO LIBRE

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

EVENT CALENDAR SM SHOWTIME EVENT CALENDAR

Pixel Art Media Production Company
presents
Oyaji

Diercted by CJ Andaluz

AUGUST 5 AND 6, 2006
SM Megamall Cinema 4
10:00 a.m., 1:00 p.m., 4:00 p.m.
For ticket inquiries, please call 845 2659

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Plutonic ...

From page D3

mean, *kinumandeer*.)

* * *

Host: How did you start your career as a model?

Guest: Oh, so long ago, I started to model in lunching shows.

(What in the world are lunching shows?— Oh, fashion shows at lunchtime!)

* * *

Host: Was it hard for you, making a name for yourself in high society?

Guest: Oh, very hard. After all, *hindi naman ako galing sa buena de familia*!

(*Ay, buena de familia*!)

* * *

Host: Was this an especially difficult production to do?

Guest: It was really more difficult—we were burning the lights and candles to finish it in time!

(It's a good thing the *theater* didn't burn down, too.)

* * *

Host: Who will attend this conference?

Guest: Aside from civic leaders and political officials, also many representatives of the religious sex.

(—You *must* mean religious *sects*!)

* * *

Host: What vegetables do you use for this dish?

Guest: For better flavor, it tastes even better with slight carrots.

(Slight carrots? What about *sobrang* peas, promise, as in?)

* * *

Host: Where did you get your interest and talent in cooking?

Guest: From my mother—*siya'y isang magaling na* cookbook teacher.

(Ah, come again?)

* * *

Host: Are you two sweethearts?

Guest: Oh, no. We've been friends for a long time and we love each other, but our relationship is just Plutonic!

(If "platonic" refers to Plato, where is "Plutonic" derived from—Plutarch? The planet Pluto?—Far out!)

'Syriana'

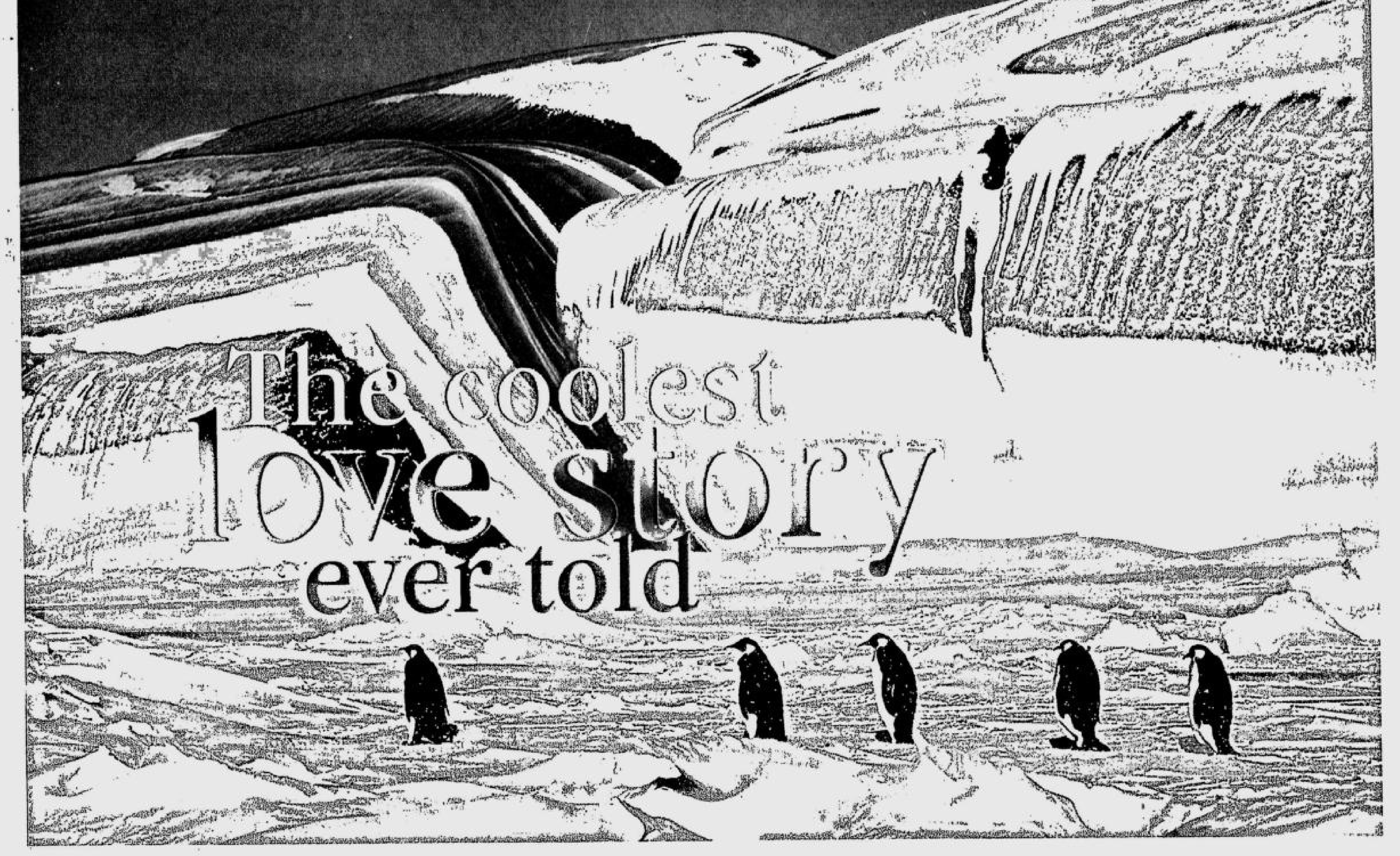
THE ACCLAIMED POlitical thriller, "Syriana," starring **George Clooney**, is now on DVD and video. In the compelling movie, Clooney plays a career CIA operative who uncovers the tragic truth about the work to which he's devoted his life, while an up-and-coming oil broker (**Matt Damon**) faces a family tragedy and finds redemption in his partnership with an idealistic Gulf prince.

Bituin Escalante

SINGER **Bituin Escalante** is making her non-musical theatrical debut in Actor's Actors' production of the gripping thriller, "Death and the Maiden," on Aug. 5, 19 and 20 at the Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza. She plays a torture victim who avenges herself on those who have abused her. **Bart Guingona** directs. Call 536-5844.

Writing contest

CHILDREN AGED 6-12 years old are invited to join the Francis Padua Papica Short Story Writing Contest, billed as "Mga Kwentong Pambata ng Papica." Deadline is on Sept. 15. Call 928-3121 or log on to www.papicafoundation.com for details.



The coolest love story ever told

EACH WINTER, IN THE merciless ice deserts of Antarctica, the most inhospitable terrain on earth, a truly remarkable journey takes place. Emperor penguins abandon the security of their ocean home by the thousands and clamber onto the frozen ice to begin the trek to a region so bleak, so extreme, it can support no other form of wildlife at this time of year.

The penguins march in a single file, undeterred by icy blizzards and treacherous obstacles—resolute, indomitable, driven by the overpowering urge to reproduce and assure the survival of the species.

Guided by instinct and the otherworldly radiance of the Southern Cross, they head unerringly for their traditional breeding ground where, after a ritual courtship of intricate dances and delicate maneuvering, accompanied by ecstatic "singing," they form monogamous couples and mate.

The days grow short, the weather becomes more bitter. The females stay long enough to lay a single egg. Once this is accomplished, exhausted by weeks without nourishment, they start their return journey to the fish-filled seas. The male penguins are left behind to guard and hatch the precious eggs, which they cradle at all times on top of their feet! Subjected to subzero temperatures, they too face great dangers.

After two long months during which the males eat nothing, the eggs begin to hatch. The chicks can not survive for too long on the fathers' limited food reserves, dispensed as a regurgitated milky substance from parent to offspring. If the mothers are late returning from the ocean, the newly-hatched young will die.

Once the families are reunited, the roles reverse. The mothers stay with the young while their mates, weak from near starvation, head for the sea. As the weather grows warmer and the ice melts, the adults repeat the arduous routine countless times until the chicks are ready to live on their own. In five years, they will make these same journeys as adults.

"March of the Penguins," a story of love, survival and family devotion made by French filmmaker Luc Jacquet, was the Best Documentary Feature winner at the 78th Annual Academy Awards last year. It has since been screened for capacity audiences worldwide. On Sept. 13, Unico Entertainment, a division of Unitel is showing the local version, "Penguin, Penguin, Paano Ka Ginawa," in local theaters.

Morgan Freeman narrated the Hollywood version; the local version is being narrated in Filipino by Sharon Cuneta, from a translation by screenwriters Cris Martinez and Eugene Evasco. The documentary runs for 85 minutes.

Are we ready?

Are Filipinos ready to watch a full-length documentary in theaters?

"The Filipino movie audience has matured a lot," says Tony Gloria, president and CEO of Unitel. "The success of 'Imelda' (another documentary, on former First Lady Imelda Marcos, earlier distributed by Unitel) at the box office was proof that today's moviegoers do not want to just be entertained; they also seek information and education."

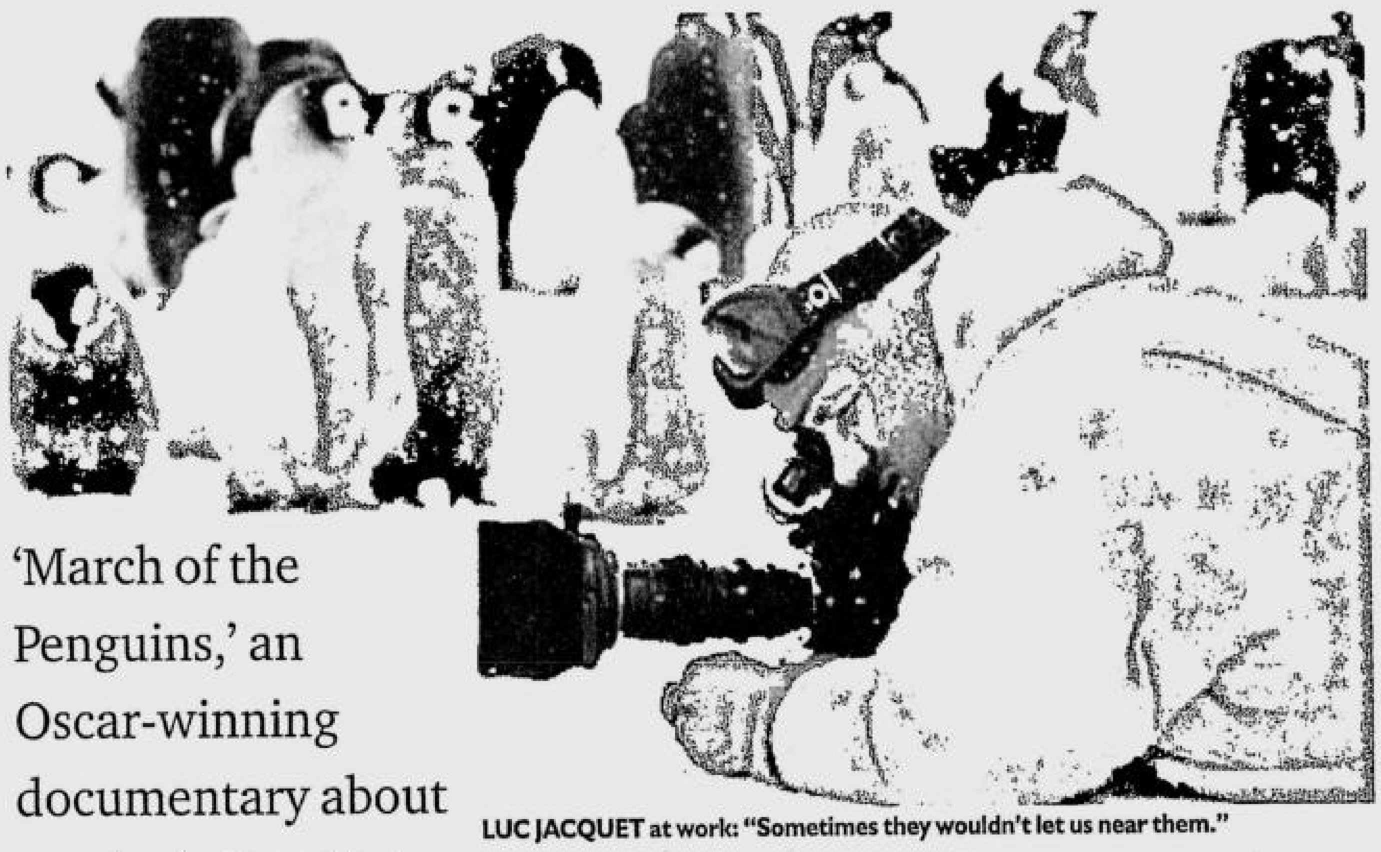
Gloria adds: "Human beings can all learn precious lessons from the penguins—about love, sacrifice, perseverance, fidelity and devotion to family. We can also learn a lot about nature and the environment."

After its Oscar win, "March of the Penguins" won for Best Editing and Best Cinematography at the British Academy Awards. It was also chosen Best Documentary by the Broadcast Film Critics Association, Chicago Film Critics Association, Las Vegas Film Critics Association, Online Film Critics Association, Phoenix Film Critics Association, St. Louis Gateway Film Critics Association and the National Board of Review.

Following are excerpts from a conversation with Luc Jacquet.

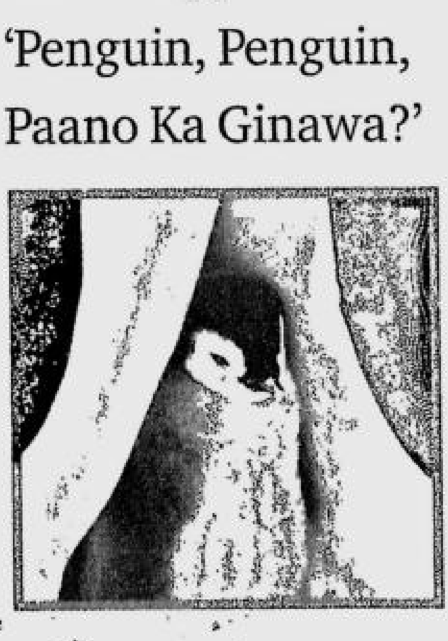
How does one come to direct a film like "March of the Penguins"?

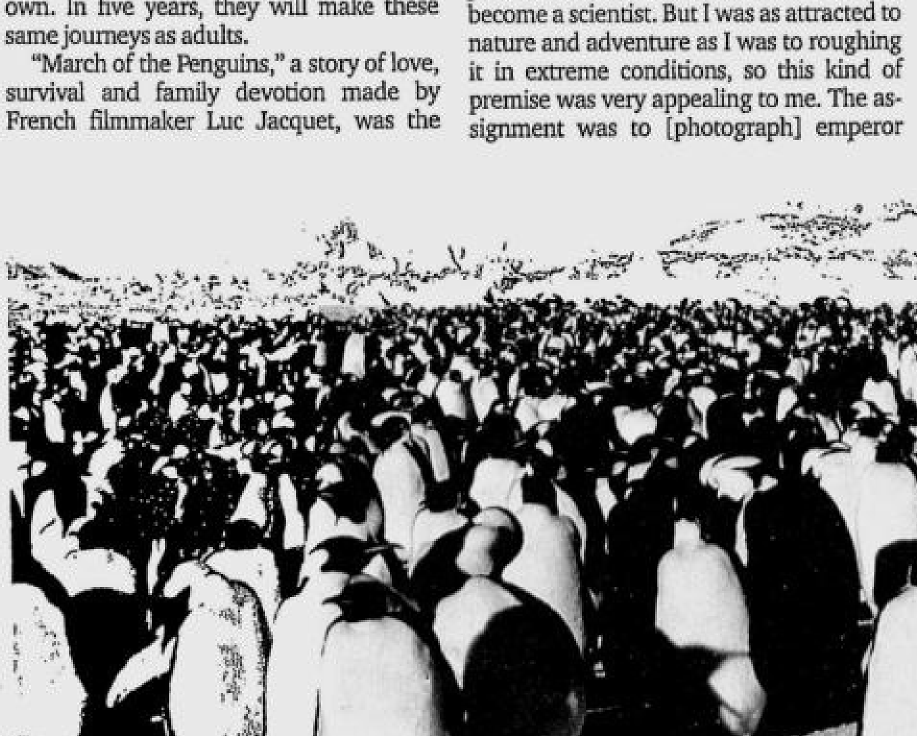
Obviously, totally by chance. It all began with an ad which basically said something like, "Looking for fearless biologist, ready to spend 14 months at the end of the world." Of course, I had studied biology, in particular animal behavior, and I wanted to become a scientist. But I was as attracted to nature and adventure as I was to roughing it in extreme conditions, so this kind of premise was very appealing to me. The assignment was to [photograph] emperor penguins. I was 24 at the time.



LUC JACQUET at work: "Sometimes they wouldn't let us near them."

'March of the Penguins,' an Oscar-winning documentary about survival, devotion and a 'cursed species,' comes to the Philippines as 'Penguin, Penguin, Paano Ka Ginawa?'





RARE SUNSHINE at the breeding ground. The film is about family (top right).

Weren't you intimidated by the prospect of working in such extreme conditions?

Not at all. I was born in Eastern France, in the Jura mountains, and started skiing when I was three. In the end, I was not that interested in the academic side of research, which required much more effort on interpretation rather than field work, which I preferred. Just then, a friend came back from shooting a documentary on orcas (killer whales) in Crozet Island, in the French Antarctic Territories. That gave me the idea for my first film, "Sea Leopard, Lord of the Ice." Everything took off after this, and there were many trips to the Antarctic.

How did "March of the Penguins" evolve?

I started the project four years ago. The producers (Bonne Pioche) came on board in August and we had to work fast to meet our goal of starting production in January. As the story evolved, we all agreed with enormous enthusiasm—which was an incredible driving force—that what was originally intended to be a television film needed to become a feature-length theatrical film.

With challenges at every level, this became a rare adventure. At times, [it felt] like a military operation. But it was all pleasure in the end. I had this pure and simple, very straightforward story of survival for this cursed species. I knew where and when to film. We knew what was going to happen, where and with whom, but we did not know exactly "how."

Why do you say "cursed species"?

The emperor penguin is a fabulous creature, capable of diving as deep as 1,400 feet in the open seas, for as long as 20 minutes. But in order to breed, for some unknown reason, this extraordinary creature pays an enormous price for all his majesty, and finds himself walking like a penitent for miles upon miles in the blizzards of Antarctica, far from the ocean, just to lay one egg. He does this in the most stable environment he can find, and then goes back and forth all winter between the colony where his life is hellish, and the sea where he finds his sustenance! There are only a few dozen places where he can lay his eggs. We are almost in the realm of biotics. There are no living cells in Antarctica, and in this white desert, the emperor is the sentinel, the last living element on the planet. Although Antarctica is not yet space, it is almost no longer earth! We are on the border between reality and fantasy.

The penguin, despite being an animal, is extraordinarily endearing, and occasionally has striking human qualities. Filmically, there are many twists and turns in the story. In some years, up to 80 percent of the chicks die.

Were there unexpected dangers?

Yes. For instance, if you get too close to the colony, hundreds of eggs can be lost. This gives you a great sense of responsibility. [Throughout the filming] I never witnessed any single emperor penguin being attacked. This is probably because it requires too much energy which they cannot afford to lose. We had a very peculiar relationship with them. One day, they let us approach, and the next, they wouldn't. We had to be on our best behavior. There's a saying that goes, "If you want to dominate nature, you have to obey it."

How long did you shoot?

One year, for 120 hours of images. A whole winter-over cycle, the cycle of the emperor—and this without seeing any of the images as we were progressing. Neither the men, nor the footage left the shoot before the story wrapped. It took me another year to recover. Re-entry is a long process.

Is global warming (which ranges from 4° to 10° depending on the region) a menace for the penguins?

It is clear that if the sea ice shrinks, the penguins will not have to walk as far to get to the ocean. But they'll have less to eat. Many species—seals, whales, penguins, among others—feed on krill (shrimp-like crustaceans), and because the winter ice has been melting, and the krill feed on algae which grows under the sea ice, there is less krill. This is just one proof that climate change has immediate consequences.

Wanted: Inspiration for Dennis Trillo

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

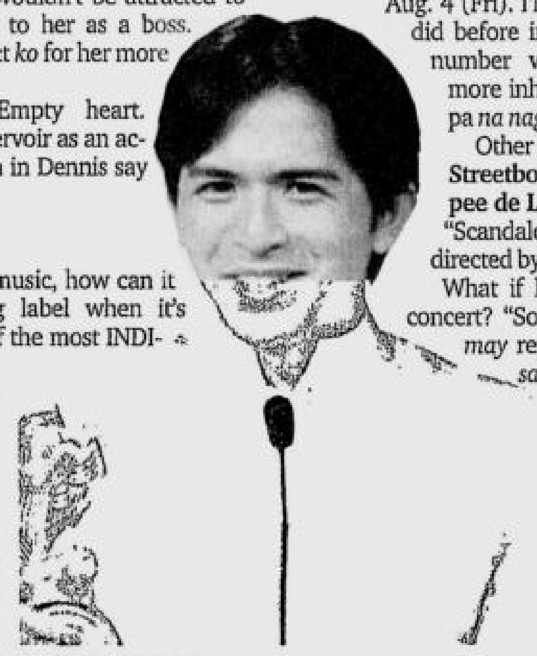
DENNIS TRILLO IS OUT TO ROCK YOUR world as Indimusic's first recording artist. No less than **Regine Velasquez** and **Ogie Alcasid** (who formed Indimusic) believe in Dennis' potential as a singer. They plan to release his debut album before his major concert at the Big Dome in November. "It's surreal," Dennis says. "I used to sing with my band just as a hobby. Never in my wildest dreams did I see myself as a professional singer."

He describes his style as edgy. "I will have a duet with Regine in my album and hopefully, compose a song, too. I want to have my own sound though my packaging will be a la **John Mayer**, perhaps."

What he also wants is an inspiration. "I'm loveless! I wish I had someone to sing my songs for. Problem is, I don't like courting girls. I prefer things to just develop between us."

I teased him, "What about Regine? You'll be seeing a lot of her while finishing your album." He blushed. "Who wouldn't be attracted to her? But I look up to her as a boss. *Nananaig ang* respect *ko* for her more than anything."

Full calendar. Empty heart. Deep emotional reservoir as an actor. Let the musician in Dennis say the rest.



DENNIS TRILLO

OPM

Speaking of Indimusic, how can it fail as a recording label when it's backed up by two of the most INDI-mand singers ever?

"I can't be singing forever," Regine says. "When I retire I still want to be part of the biz so I might as well start now by discovering new artists." Ogie agrees. "Music has always been our passion. Our first project will be the album of Dennis and then the soundtrack of Regine's movie with Robin, 'Till I Met You.'"

They have the blessings of **Vic del Rosario** to go on their own. Only their contracts with Viva expired, not their friendship with Boss Vic .

Regine fondly calls Ogie "Mr. President"—his designation in their company. She's chief financial officer. During the launch, their chemistry was evident even in unguarded moments. But to tease them on their rumored romance would make one sound like a broken record.

It's enough that their partnership cannot be pirated. They made it without having to fake it. And so will Indimusic, eventually. It's OPM in a sense—Outstanding Partners' Mission.

Glad/Sad Gladys

One of my fave posters is a picture of a sad clown. It reads, "Happiness is not always measured in smiles." How hard it is to be a clown when you're feeling down. Ask comic diva **Gladys Guevarra**. She's still nursing a broken heart after her split-up with her doctor-BF of five years. "Instead of sulking, I'm having a sort of coming out concert at the Music Museum on Aug. 4 (Fri). I'll be doing things I never did before in my gigs like an erotic number with Dennis Trillo! No more inhibitions *kasi wala ng papa na nagbabawal!* "

Other guests include **Teri Onor, Streetboys, Gian Sotto, Keempee de Leon** and **Oyo Boy Sotto.** "Scandalous Gladys" is written and directed by **Phillip Lazaro.**

What if her ex shows up at her concert? "Sorry. *Sa* concert *lang ako may* repeat performance. *Hindi sa* love! " (For tickets, call 7216726.)

'Oh My Ghost'

Ruffa Mae Quinto and **Marvin Agustin** are reunited on screen in OctoArts' horror-comedy "Oh My Ghost." They were last seen together in "Super B" (2002). "After four years, Marvs and I have both matured and improved our craft. One thing I like about him is *wala siyang arte sa katawan. Yung walang pakialam kahit anong hitsura niya o ipagawa sa kanya*," says Ruffa Mae who plays a ghost in the film.

"I haunt my rapists **Paolo Contis, Uma Khouny** and **Carlos Agassi.** In fairness, *magaling silang mang rape ha* (laughs)!" But the three guys she would want to watch over if she were a real ghost are her leading men Marvin, **Richard Gutierrez** and **Sam Milby.** "Marvs because he cooks so well, Chard *kasi* he's the crush of Aerobika (her "Captain Barbell" character) and Sam because *magaling siya mag*-English." Catch her sexy apparition in theaters on Aug 16. Ready, get set, Ghost!

Album launch

Universal Records' newest contract star **Aaron** will launch his debut album "Right Next To Me" in ABS-CBN's "ASAP Mania" on Aug 6. It has 12 cool cuts including the remake of Neocolours' hit "Kasalanan Ko Ba" and a love ballad "Paano" arranged by R&B guru **Keith Martin.** With his boyish charms and talent, Aaron will score an "A" as the next pop teen star.

Song For A Cause

Soul Siren **Nina**'s new song "Araw Mo" is essentially a "Happy Birthday" song reinvented for the Filipino. This worthwhile endeavor was conceived by Goldilocks Bakeshop in commemoration of its 40th anniversary. Even more notable than the song's nationalistic undertone is the advocacy it supports. Proceeds shall go to The Leukemic Indigents Fund Endowment (LIFE) and Unicef. CDs of the song and other tracks are available in Goldilocks outlets for P75.

B-DAY buBOY

After I write this column, I'm off to the birthday bash of *mi amigo muy simpatico* **Cesar Montano.** It will be held at Aruba (T. Morato). I will let you in on his celebration in our next issue. His gorgeous wife **Sunshine** texted that there will be cell phones and gift packs raffled off. Ever heard of a birthday boy like him who gives instead of receive presents?

Aruy Aruba!

Speaking of Aruba, it reminds me of the ongoing case **Inday Garutay** (my mom's gay impersonator) filed against the bar. She got pissed when she was asked to leave the bar because cross-dressers are not welcome there. My heart goes out to Inday because she's like family to IC and me. I also happen to be good friends with its owners (Jasper and Melinda) and staff (ever-reliable Jox). So I feel quite torn. I only hope they will be able to resolve things. Barhoppers like Inday G. have as much right as bar owners to keep their chin up as they go bottoms up.

Personal

Speaking of Inday Garutay, it's my mom's birthday on Aug 6. But I celebrate her memory daily. Happy B-(adiday!), Ma. You never really left me because everyday you are reborn in my heart.

For feedback, e-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com

ROUNDUP

"HIGH School Musical"

Emmy nods for Disney

DISNEY CHANNEL HAS RECEIVED SEVEN PRIME TIME EMMY AWARD nominations, six of which are for "High School Musical"—Outstanding Children's Program; Outstanding Casting for a Miniseries, Movie or a Special; Outstanding Music; Outstanding Lyrics; Outstanding Directing for a Miniseries, Movie or a Drama Special; and Outstanding Choreography.

The live-action series "The Suite Life of Zack & Cody" and choreographer Travis Payne got a nomination for Outstanding Choreography.

The 58th annual Prime Time Emmy Awards ceremony will be held on Aug. 27 at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

Sparkling Wega TVs

SONY Philippines has launched its Sparkling Wega series, new line of CRT sets with real flat screens.

Hiroaki Kobayashi, president of Sony Philippines, says, "Other CRT TV flat versions that appear flat on the surface are actually curved inside. Plus, Sparkling Wega boasts exceptionally bright image with greater depth and quality and higher contrast ratio."

Big on fun

COLUMBIA Pictures' new comedy, "Little Man," stars the "White Chicks" team of Shawn Wayans and Marlon Wayans.

"Coming up with an idea for a movie is never a problem for the Wayans brothers," says producer Rick Alvarez. "They've got a million ideas, but there's always one that breaks through and we all get really excited about. We loved the concept of literally shrinking Marlon down to someone who was two and a half feet tall [in this movie]."

LITTLE Man

Spike on Katrina

MIAMI—Spike Lee's movie about Hurricane Katrina might get an audience from the head of the US agency that responds to disasters, but the celebrity director should not necessarily expect President George W. Bush to watch it.

Federal Emergency Management Agency director R. David Paulison said Monday that if he is not too busy grappling with hurricane season, he will probably catch Lee's film, "When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts," scheduled to air on HBO Aug. 21-22. Lee has had harsh words for Paulison's agency, saying recently that Americans should be scared after Fema's much-criticized slow response to Katrina in New Orleans. "Pray to God you don't have to depend on Fema," the director said at the Television Critics Association's summer meeting. **AP**

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE ANT BULLY	2 JUST MY LUCK	3 THX MIAMI VICE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 2 / THE PRODUCERS	5 WOLF CREEK	6 SUKOB	7 THE BREAK-UP
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 SUKOB	2 MIAMI VICE					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE ANT BULLY GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MIAMI VICE GUARANTEED SEATS	3 JUST MY LUCK GUARANTEED SEATS	4 THE BREAK-UP GUARANTEED SEATS	5 SUKOB GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX MIAMI VICE	2 SUKOB	3 THE ANT BULLY	4 WOLF CREEK	5 THE BREAK-UP		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 SUKOB	2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN: DEAD MAN'S CHEST	3 THE ANT BULLY	4 LOVEWRECKED			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 SUKOB	2 WOLF CREEK	3 TAMARA	4 MIAMI VICE	5 THE ANT BULLY		

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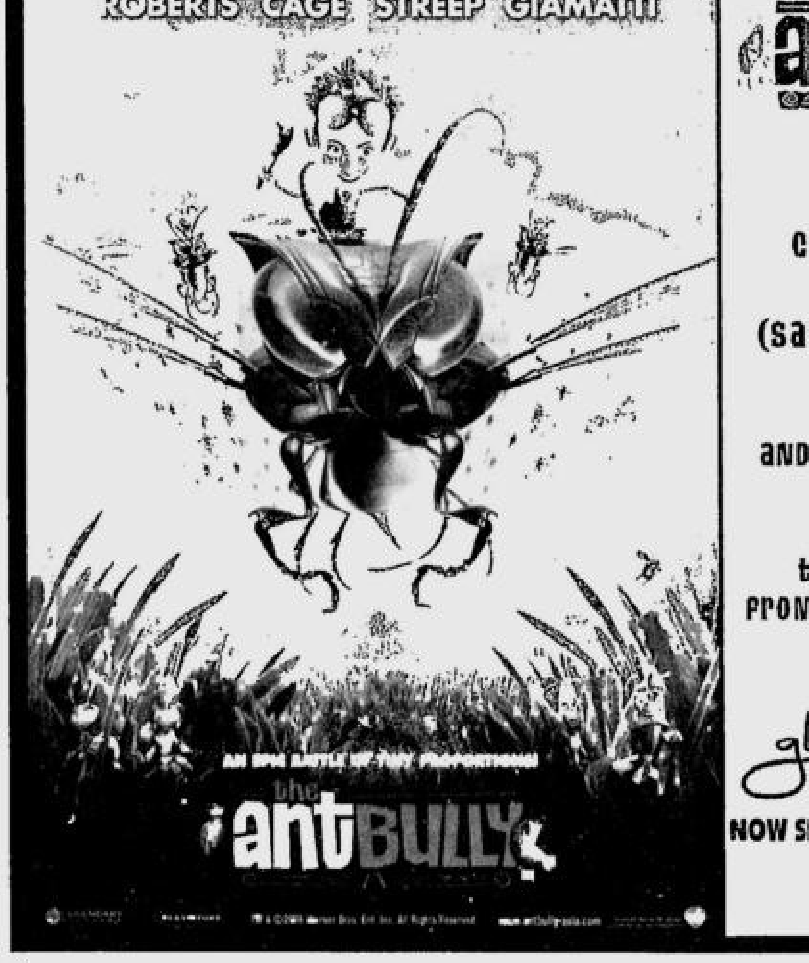

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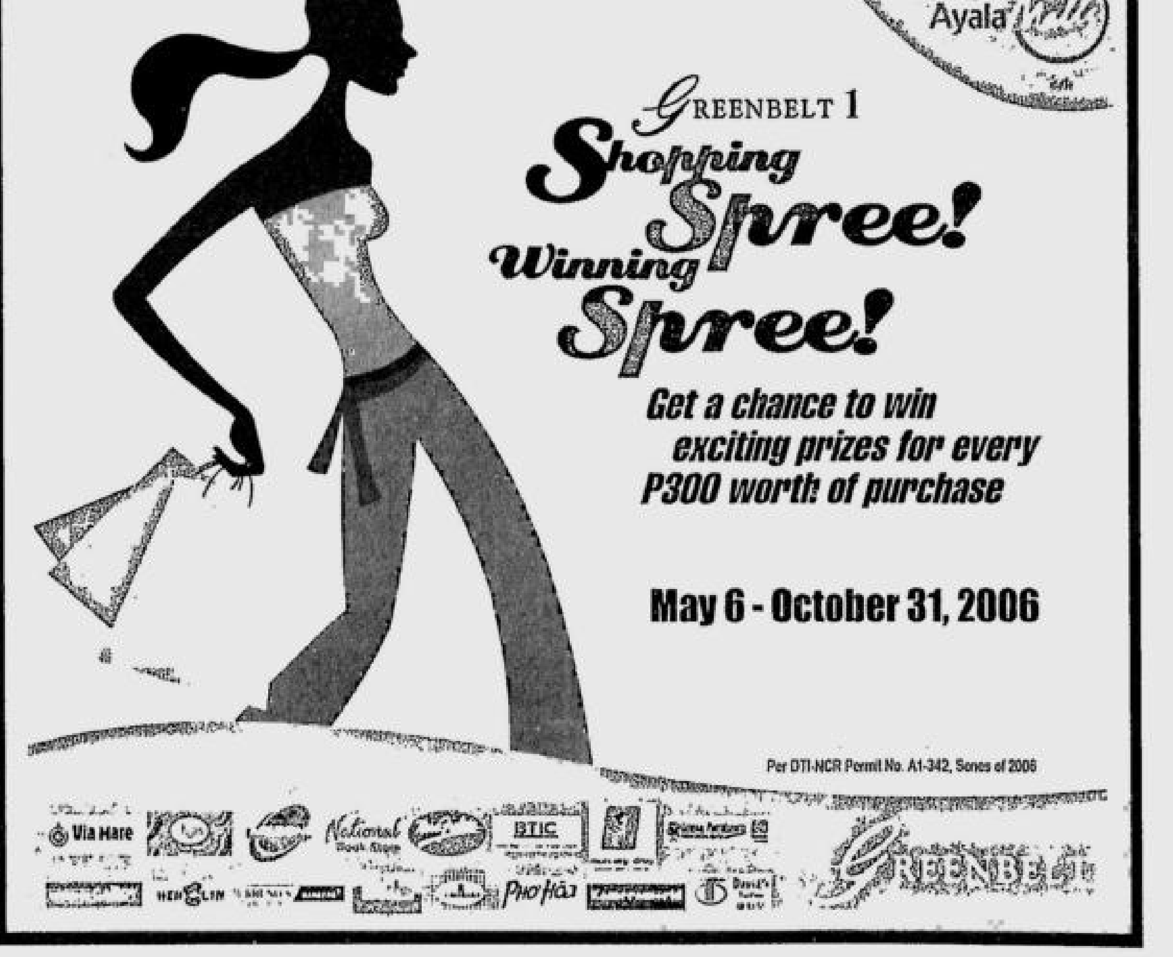

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A Subsidiary of Equitable PCI Bank

25th Anniversary Special

Thursday, August 3, 2006

Still the leader at 25 years

PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. leads the way in all fronts

On its silver jubilee year, in the P65 Billion Industry, PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. reports golden industry leading performance.

PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc.'s market dominance is marked with total assets at P8.25 Billion, double that of the resources of its closest competitor.

In terms of total portfolio, at P7.31 Billion, it has the largest leasing portfolio at P3.77 Billion. The portfolio boasts of innovative services like direct lease, sale & leaseback, amortized commercial loans, receivables discounting, installment papers purchased and receivables factoring. Its financing portfolio exceeded competition.

In terms of total loans booked at P9.97 Billion, PCI Leasing stands at the summit. The second placer lagged in volume by a good three quarters in volume.

Lease bookings at P2.56 Billion, from bank referral business and expansion in growth areas, remain unchallenged.

Net Income at P393.8 Million is the highest in the industry. Profitability resulted from product and service quality, cost-efficient operations, aggressive marketing strategies, and solid parent-bank support. The professionalism of its top personnel strengthened its competitive edge. PCI Leasing's President & Chief Executive Officer, Manolo C. Arzadon was inducted into the 2005 Asia Business Leaders Awards Honor Roll.

Leading the way with excellence and distinction, PCI Leasing envisions market dominance, as it optimizes opportunities for growth and is driven to maintain its top position. ▪

Leading The Way With Excellence

PCI Leasing & Finance achieved leadership in 1995. To let the public have a stake in the industry-wide leadership, the IPO was offered in 1997.

In January 1997, PCI Leasing was listed at the Philippine Stock Exchange. However, the crisis of 1997 struck. Competitors with thin margins stopped lending and closed their businesses. The PCI Leasing portfolio dropped from P6 Billion to P4 Billion. Money was tight. However, in the most trying times, opportunities abounded. "It was a good time to realize that we can really handle crisis. That was when we realized we were not competing in terms of rates," says Manolo C. Arzadon, PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. President & Chief Executive Officer. Since PCI Leasing had stricter credit policies, offered a wider array of products and services – the company was able to offer receivables, obtain income from reserves, weather the 1997 crisis, and most of all strengthen customer loyalty. "Our customers realized the strength of the company. Our customers were even approached by our competitors with better terms, but our customers said *PCI Leasing was always there for me, so I will be here with them*. Any crisis can come in anytime, better opportunities arise when crisis comes," says Roberto E. Lapid, PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. First Vice President & Director. Thus, PCI Leasing has earned a reputation of being a company that would always be there for the client, in good times and during crisis.

"We have set the trends for our competitors,' beams PCI Leasing Chairperson, Corazon S. de la Paz.

Focus on the company's resolute aim, propelled PCI Leasing's rise to No. 1 under the stewardship of its former president, Rene J. Buenaventura.

"When you achieve excellence, you lead the way" affirms PCI Leasing President and Chief Executive Officer, Manolo C. Arzadon.

> "Excellence is the essence of the company embodied in everything the company does and doesn't do."

Former PCI Leasing President Rene J. Buenaventura is highly credited for paving the way towards PCI Leasing's leadership. He was also then the Executive Vice President of Equitable PCI Bank. During that time, there was focus on what the company wanted to be. Customers and their business needs was the core of the company's efforts. Efficiencies and productivities were carefully scrutinized. Parent-Bank support was solid. Orchestrated strategies were designed to propel the company towards achieving this status.

Being number 1 in all aspects of industry success indicators, PCI Leasing's portfolio surged by 45%, net

continued on p. 2

Partner with the Leader
Still the leader at 25 years

In our 25 years of excellence, we at PCI Leasing & Finance understand your passion for your business. It is our priority to see to it that we give you the best financial assistance so you can enjoy the fruits of your labor.

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PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc.
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Milestones:
25 Years of Success
Retracing the Path of a Leader

PCI Leasing Head Office

1981
- PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. was incorporated on March 10, 1981
- PCI Leasing started commercial operations on August 3, 1981

1982
- PCI Leasing introduced Personal Loans Program for Meralco Employees
- It was also granted a license to operate in the Visayan Region via its Cebu Branch

1983
- PCI Leasing moved to its new corporate headquarters at Equitable PCI Bank Tower 1 along Makati Avenue.
- Two of its branches commenced its commercial operations- Cebu and Ortigas
- PCI Leasing's Board of Directors approved the declaration of 30% stock dividends on January 31, 1984

1985
- SEC granted PCI Leasing its license to issue Commercial Papers up to P45Million. It is one of the non-quasi bank financial institutions to receive such approval, thus, reflecting its high credit standing in the local financial community.
- PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. secured the approval of SEC to issue Preferred Shares amounting to P20 Million

1987
- Davao Branch was created
- PCI Leasing board approved the declaration of stock dividends bringing the common stock issued to P20 Million

1988
- April 1988 marked PCI Leasing's entry in the highly profitable car financing scheme
- SEC approved PCI Leasing's application to issue Commercial Papers to the public up to P180 Million
- PCI Leasing declared a P25 Million stock dividend that resulted to a hefty P80 Million paid-up capital, making it one of the more highly capitalized firms in the finance industry

1994
- PCI Leasing became the country's largest financing industry as Gross Income expanded to P592 Million with Net Income at P142 Million, equity at P479 Million and Total Assets placed at P2.5 Billion
- PCI Leasing was adjudged as the "Most Outstanding Newly Accredited Financial Institution" by the Guarantee Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises (GFSME)
- Cagayan De Oro Branch was established in March 1994
- Dagupan Branch was created in April 1994

1995
- San Pablo Branch was opened in February 1995
- In June 1995, PCI Leasing moved to its new corporate headquarters at PCI Leasing Centre in Corinthian Gardens, Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City
- Iloilo Branch was created in September 1995

1996
- Receivables Factoring was introduced catering primarily to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) as well as exporters
- Sales and Service Quality Councils (SSQC) was created to help strengthen PCI Leasing's focus on the needs of the customers
- Cavite Branch was opened in May 1996

1997
- PCI Leasing earned a Polaris Award by CIBI for having consistently obtained a high credit rating for its STCP issuance annually since 1985
- PCI Leasing was listed at the Philippine Stock Exchange on January 6, 1997. 20% was offered to the public consisting of 121,220,000 shares at an IPO price of P6.95 per share, while PCIBank retained 80% ownership

1998
- PCI Leasing's Employee Council was one of the first groups that distributed relief goods to the typhoon victims in Bani, Pangasinan

2000
- PCI Leasing, together with Equitable Bank Foundation, Inc., participated in the UNESCO-Awardee Project "Bridge Mindanao" a literacy and livelihood project for the people of Mindanao

2001
- PCI Leasing, in coordination with the Community Learners School of New Manila, supported medical mission for 200 family members of the Aeta Community of Kalangitan, Capas, Tarlac. Also, together with Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish, the company solicited medicine for malnourished elementary students of Valencia Public School of Quezon City

2003
- PCI Leasing supported the vision and goal of Gawad Kalinga to build homes and communities for the poor. The company was instrumental in providing the people of San Juan, Batangas a two room barrio school building in its desire to help in education. Generous support was also accorded to Kapwa Ko Mahal Ko Foundation, Inc. and Muntinlupa Development Foundation

2004
- Angeles Marketing Team was created in January 2004
- PCI Leasing received a PRS 1 credit rating from Philippine Rating Services Corp. (PhilRatings) for its proposed P5 Million short-term commercial paper. This rating represents the "Best Grade" and the strongest capability for the timely payment of the STCP issue for both principal and interest

2005
- Equitable Pentad Rental, Inc. was incorporated to address and cater to a growing niche of operating lease-oriented clients
- PCI Leasing was cited by the BSP's Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) for being compliant in its reportorial requirements since its inception in March 2003
- PCI Leasing President and CEO Manolo C. Arzadon was inducted into the 2005 Asia Business Leader Awards Honor Roll, a permanent list of exemplary executives
- Through its Employee Council, PCI Leasing sponsored a Christmas Party to 100 pupils and their families of Prayer Mountain Elementary School in Antipolo City in December 2005.
- On January 18, 2005, PCI Leasing increased its Authorized Capital Stock to P3.42 Billion and the same time declared Cash Dividends in the total amount of P196,960,759 and Stock Dividends in the aggregate amount of P1,179,646,554
- PCI Leasing retained its PRS 1 credit rating from Philippine Rating Services Corp. (PhilRatings).
- PCI Leasing ranked first on all scales, leaving even its closest competitors far behind. Its total resources reached P8.25 Billion and with total loan/lease portfolio at P7.31 Billion. Total lease bookings registered at P2.56 Billion, the largest in the industry.

2006
- General Santos City Marketing Team was created in January 2006
- Both Isabela and Naga Marketing Teams were established in May 2006

> **"The essence of a company lies in its people. When you achieve excellence, you lead the way. People choose to deal with you. It is a choice they make not based on a very good product alone but because of your integrity, honesty and support. Because of the essence of the company, people listen to you and stay with you. When you achieve that kind of essence, everything you do is what the industry wants."**
>
> - Manolo C. Arzadon
> President and Chief Executive Officer
> PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc.

Leading The Way ... continued

income went up to P393.8 million. In 2005 PCI Leasing catapulted to number 1 in the leasing portfolio. "We will overcome competition," PCI Leasing's planning conference battlecry, with the objective of setting the pace, was taken to heart and was achieved by the end of 2005. PCI Leasing is proud of this achievement. "We are proud to say that we capitalized on opportunities to contribute strongly to the drive toward dominance, and we stood firmly for excellence and distinction in our own industry," Arzadon voices. ▪

Virtually unchallenged. Arzadon is inimitable as he leads the way in a spirit of modesty, humility and simplicity.

"Better opportunities arise when crisis comes," says the ever articulate Lapid.

PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. BOARD OF DIRECTORS Year 2006-2007

CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ
Chairperson

RENE J. BUENAVENTURA
Vice Chairman

MANOLO C. ARZADON
President & Director

NAZARIO S. CABUQUIT, JR.
Director

ANTONIO N. COTOCO
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Director

EDMUNDO L. TAN
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Director

LUIS MA. G. URANZA
Corporate Secretary

Leading the Industry
Virtually Unchallenged

PCI Leasing in 2005 bested all major industry players in terms of total resources, portfolio, total loans and leases booked, and net income*.

PCI Leasing - No. 1 - Unchallenged in the Industry*

Total Resources	P8.25 Billion
Total Portfolio	P7.31 Billion
Leasing Portfolio	P3.77 Billion
Total Loans & Leases Booked	P9.97 Billion
Net Income	P393.8 Million

*Based on audited financial reports for 2005.

> In the pursuit of excellence, we lead the way, we aim to make a difference, to make an impact on individuals, families, communities, businesses, the company, the country, the region, the world.

The average industry growth for 10 years was constantly increasing. The industry has been growing at 6%, 7%, 8%, then 10% annually, following the growth rate of the Philippine economy. The estimated P63 Billion Leasing & Financing industry total assets has grown an average of 10% a year. "We have been similarly growing for the last 5 years capturing 14% of the market. "It's like we are the industry, says Mr. Arzadon. PCI Leasing is a distinct unique brand that sets the standards." PCI Leasing sets the pace. ▪

PCI LEASING CENTRE

PCI Leasing Team. PCI Leasing's ace is a large number of seasoned, experienced, highly trained, technically competent, and upright professionals working as a team and contributing to the growth of the nation and the communities they serve.

Leading Shareholders

PCI Leasing records P1B in Retained Earnings

PCI Leasing made an unprecedented declaration in the industry - 120% stock dividend and 20% cash dividend for shareholders in 2005, and records P1B in retained earnings.

PCI Leasing's Productivity Improvement Committee reduced all operational expenses and streamlined processes, with the end result of substantial cost savings which contribute to the increase in bottom line profits for shareholders. ▫

Future Thrusts and Directions

Redefining the Future of Consumer Financing

To increase loyalty between the company and its clients and to maintain a mutually sound business relationship is one of PCI Leasing's chief aims. PCI Leasing's goal is no longer rising to the top, but making sure it maintains its lead by consciously widening the gap between the company and its competitors. This has been PCI Leasing's thrust for the past several years—to be light years ahead as innovators of the industry.

PCI Leasing's direction is set on being always available to each and every client, nationwide. Market penetration is currently being planned as well as to gain an increase of market share.

To cater to a growing niche of operating lease-oriented clients, Equitable Pentad Rental, Inc. was incorporated. This aligns PCI Leasing globally with the imposition of the new international accounting standards wherein operating leases clients can classify, deduct the whole payment as a rental expense, disregarding the need to pay for mortgage fees. PCI Leasing foresees offering both financing and operating leases, among others.

In North America, 4 out of 5 companies, including those in the Fortune 500 lease. Here in the Philippines, it is 1% Leasing, 99% Financing. Although, PCI Leasing has already introduced leasing here. Slowly, PCI Leasing wants to change the classic thinking of the Filipino that "if one wants to have something it has to be in his name." In operating leasing, the equipment or vehicle is under PCI Leasing's name. This is a new way of consumer financing being introduced. "Initially, we encounter clients who want financing. But after we've educated them they would opt for leasing," says PCI Leasing First Vice President Lapid. PCI Leasing believes that it is important to give the client first what he wants then educate him later. ▫

> **"We want to be able to go to SMEs, and tell them that the best way is through us. We have this responsibility to help out these people. Some of our sunrise clients fail because they can't manage their businesses effectively. We should be able to give them alternatives."**

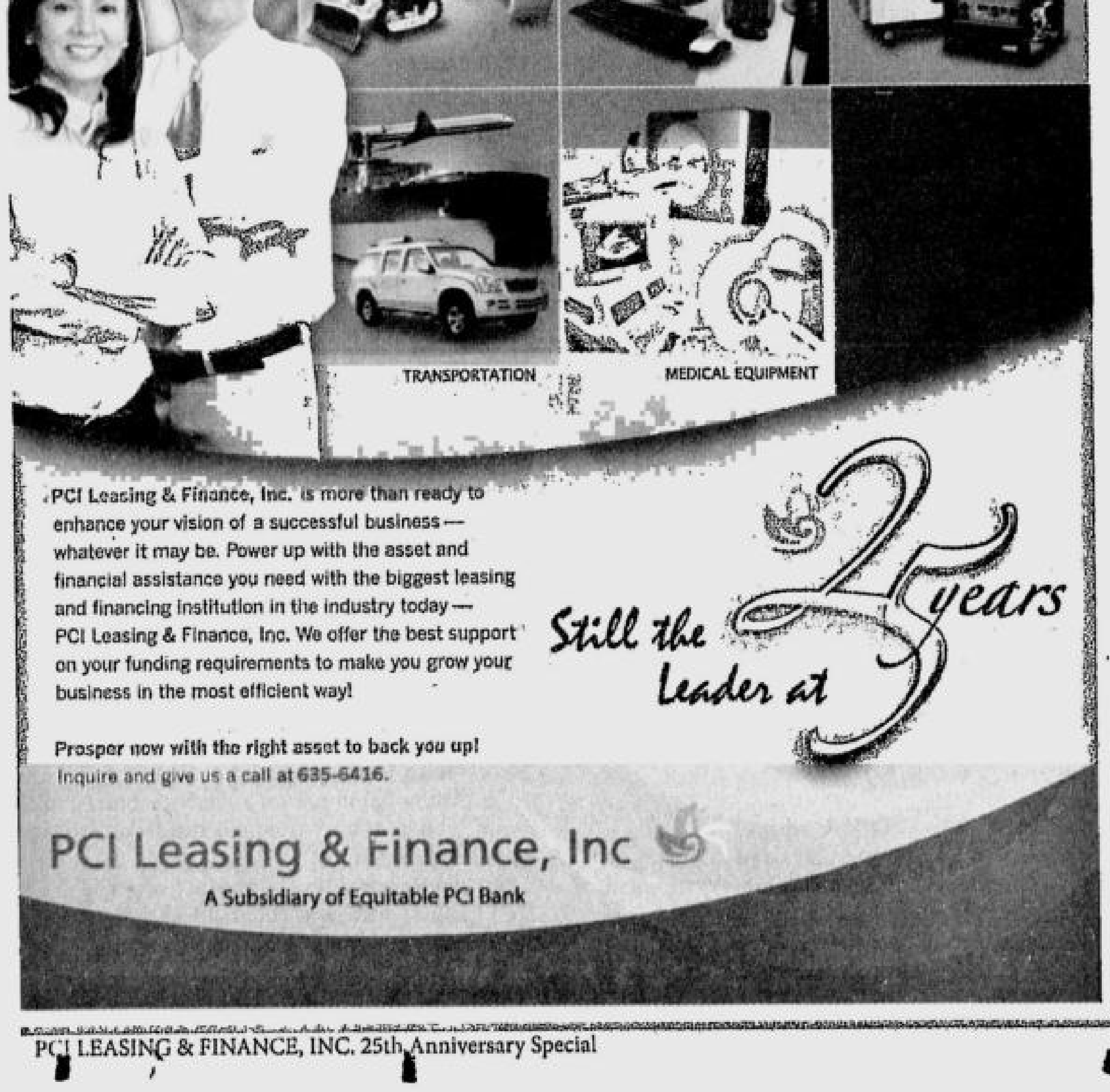
PCI Leasing President Inducted Into the Asia Business Leader Awards Honor Roll

Manolo C. Arzadon, President and CEO of PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc., was inducted into the 2005 Asia Business Leader Awards Honor Roll, a permanent list of exemplary executives.

ASI
BUSINES
LEADE

The Asia Business Leader Awards (ABLA) was launched in 2001 to showcase and profile outstanding examples of corporate leadership and excellence in business today.

Mr. Arzadon was one of the 39 finalists selected by the judging panel for the various award categories and invited by the President and CEO of CNBC Asia Pacific to Kuala Lumpur to receive his plaque and be included in a permanent list of exemplary executives in the Asia Pacific region. ▫



PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. is more than ready to enhance your vision of a successful business — whatever it may be. Power up with the asset and financial assistance you need with the biggest leasing and financing institution in the industry today — PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. We offer the best support on your funding requirements to make you grow your business in the most efficient way!

Prosper now with the right asset to back you up!
Inquire and give us a call at 635-6416.

PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc
A Subsidiary of Equitable PCI Bank

Messages

Message from the Chairperson of the Board

It is with great pleasure that I extend my warmest greetings to PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.

This special event is a reminder of our continued performance excellence, providing an opportunity to celebrate 25 years of service and leadership in leasing and finance. Over the past years, we have set the trends for our competitors, by continuously developing designs and strategies to respond quickly and effectively to our customers' diverse needs.

Thus, as we gear up for the future, I am confident that we have the key success factors necessary to withstand future challenges. Our leasing and finance expertise that radiate through our offices nationwide, spell the distinction that we have achieved through the years. Our committed and professional workforce and the trust and confidence of our clients provide us with a strong backbone. Our well-recognized market presence, combined with a strong product portfolio, pose as assets to our robust achievements.

As we mark this important milestone, let us also reflect with pride the leading role that we have played in the industry and the country, as well.

Thank you and congratulations.

Corazon S. de la Paz
Chairperson

Message from the Vice Chairman of the Board

When PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. opened its doors to the public 25 years ago, it was fully aware that it would be facing a lot of challenges from other leasing and finance companies and this will call for the display of loyalty and dedication of its workforce. Today, I can proudly say that PCI Leasing boldly embraced these challenges and has every reason to celebrate its 25th year.

PCI Leasing's continuous dominance in the industry can be attributed to its unceasing quest for product innovation and intensified client relationship. As a testament to this, it has recently registered a net income of P394 Million, outperforming all competitors also in terms of total resources, total portfolio and total bookings. With these achievements, PCI Leasing further strengthened its position as the undisputed industry leader.

As part of Equitable PCI Bank Group, PCI Leasing played a crucial role in realizing the Equitable PCI Bank group's thrust as the country's Bank of Choice. PCI Leasing has contributed significantly to the Bank's drive towards dominance and excellence.

On this special occasion, I would like to thank the people who have propelled PCI Leasing to be the leader in the leasing and finance industry and most especially its clients who have shown their support and confidence throughout the years. Let us continue nurturing this partnership and carry on PCI Leasing's successes to achieve greater heights.

Congratulations and Happy 25th Anniversary.

RJ Buenaventura

Rene J. Buenaventura
Vice Chairman

Message from the Institutional Banking Head

The leasing and financing industry has always been competitive. Since our first entry into the business 25 years ago, the essence of creatively delivering the best leasing and financing services to our customers has been our primary concern. Our recent successes speak of our higher level of competitiveness and, at the same time, reflect our unibank's thrust as the customer's "Bank of Choice."

As we usher into another year, let our achievements serve as benchmarks in sustaining our competitiveness and reaffirm our dominance in the following years to come.

With your continued dedication and cooperation, I am certain that we will remain at the forefront of the leasing and financing industry in the Philippines and will soon be at the forefront of the Asia Pacific region. With your unwavering support, I am confident we shall have the most extensive market reach and maintain our responsiveness to the markets we serve.

Thank you and congratulations.

Antonio N. Cotoco
Senior Executive Vice President

Message from the President

The rise to leadership of PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. in the industry can be attributed to a number of factors - financial strength, excellent product packaging, extensive market reach, strong customer orientation and unwavering support from Equitable PCI Bank, to name a few. The company has strongly capitalized on the focused foresight and vision of top management.

Surviving in a fiercely competitive industry requires a lot of foresight. When PCI Leasing started putting up provincial branches, skeptics had a heyday criticizing the move. But management's foresight triumphed in the end and soon competitors followed suit. Today, PCI Leasing is strategically present in 11 areas: seven (7) branches located in Dagupan, Cavite, San Pablo, Cebu, Davao, Cagayan de Oro and Iloilo and four (4) areas served by Marketing Teams—Gen. Santos, Angeles, Isabela and Naga— all are strategically located in key business centers nationwide.

PCI Leasing continues to be conscious of its role in responding to the expansion needs of its clients and recognizes that the customer is the center of its activities. Likewise, it continuously leads the industry by providing modern and relevant financial services that suit customers' needs.

PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. banks on its highly skilled and competent manpower, as its most valuable asset. On this day, we salute our dedicated employees, who continuously strive to exceed our clients' expectations.

Today, as we celebrate our 25th year, let us realize the tremendous potentials that lies within PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. Let us draw inspiration from our achievements in the past years and aim to equal and even exceed those achievements in the following years to come.

Thank you and may God continue to bless PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc.

Happy 25th Anniversary.

Manolo C. Arzadon
President & Chief Executive Officer

PCI Leasing Gets High Rating

PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc. has received a PRS 1 credit rating for its proposed P1-billion short-term commercial paper (STCP). The leasing and finance subsidiary of Equitable PCI Bank received the rating, which denotes the strongest capability for timely payment of debt instrument issue on both interest and principal, from Philippine Rating Services Corp. (PhilRatings).

The latest issue is higher than the company's P500-million note issue in 2004, which was assigned a similar rating. PCI Leasing increased the amount this year in light of an expansion in volume of booking and an increase in its portfolio.

PhilRatings said it considered the sound liquidity position, the more than adequate option available to PCI Leasing and its ability to generate cash to meet short-term obligations in assigning the highest rating.

PCI Leasing President Manolo C. Arzadon said revenue and profits continue to improve on the back of enhancements in operating efficiencies and efforts to improve synergies with its parent company.

In 2005, total revenues were at P1.1 billion, 24.5 percent hike from that of the previous year. Net income was at P393.8 million, up by 7.4 percent from that of 2004.

Debt-to-equity ratio remains quite conservative at 0.74 as of year-end 2005 even as the company relied more heavily on borrowings to support its portfolio growth.

PCI Leasing is the country's largest leasing and financing company in terms of total resources, loan and lease portfolio, capitalization and income. Its array of innovative services include direct lease, sale and leaseback, amortized commercial loans, receivables purchased, installment papers purchased and factoring of receivables. ■

Why Customers Choose PCI Leasing & Finance, Inc.

PCI Leasing is the only leasing & financing company having a single borrowers limit (SBL) of P1Billion — this amount can be lent to one borrower.

PCI Leasing leases & finances P500,000 at the minimum.

PCI Leasing minimizes SMEs dependence on exorbitant lending rates – alternative sources of funding. Many businesses close shop because of such rates. Such business owners are not aware of the potential of their receivables and other non-real estate items.

PCI Leasing delivers services in 10 days or shorter, recognizing the urgent need of the client. Competitors deliver in 30 days or more.

PCI Leasing gives sound leasing and financial management consultancy services for free.

PCI Leasing learns what clients' needs are and tailor fits leasing & financing solutions for them.

PCI Leasing helps you grow as it grows. ■

PCI Leasing & Finance Vision

Our customer is the focus of our activities.
We shall lead the industry by providing modern, relevant financial services, which exceed the customers' expectations.

"Customers' Sound Bites"

"We have a very mutually beneficial business relationship with PCI Leasing for the past 12 years. In fact, PCI Leasing has always been supportive of the Standard Insurance Group's quest for continuous growth."

Ernesto T. Echauz
President & CEO
STANDARD INSURANCE CO., INC.
Metro Manila

"As one of the satisfied clients of PCI Leasing, we have experienced and benefited from the company's high level of professionalism. Its prompt response enables us to meet our urgent requirements in good time. Dealing with PCI Leasing has been hassle-free; the company has been extremely accommodating in packaging terms which are tailor-fit to our requirements."

Nestor D. Dadivas
Chief Finance Officer
SEMIRARA MINING CORPORATION
Metro Manila

"PCI Leasing has provided me with easy access to all my financial credit requirements, thus it is a worry-free world for me when it comes to financing both my operations and capital expenditures. And in the security services industry, that counts a lot!"

Noel E. Bongat
President
CORINTHIANS GROUP OF COMPANIES
Metro Manila

"As the overseas market of Telephil expanded, our reliance on PCI Leasing continues to grow. Today, our lease facility has increased tenfold, giving us every confidence that Telephil can ramp up operational capacity on short notice—as the market demands. Indeed, we have been able to acquire hundreds of new workstations for Telephil within a space of two months. Without PCI Leasing's support, we could not have met our timelines. Telephil's success is as much theirs as it is ours."

Arturo Diago
Treasurer
TELEPHILIPPINES, INC./
CYAN GROUP
Metro Manila

"Your staff has been helpful, accommodating and always ready to attend to our needs. Your company has indeed been instrumental to the robust growth of Rhine Marketing Corporation making it the leader in the appliance installment industry today."

Edgardo T. Anselmo
President & COO
RHINE MARKETING CORPORATION
Cebu

"PCI Leasing had financed our initial acquisition of heavy equipment way back in 1996 and even until now. We are able to acquire financing loan from other companies however because of the good and fast service of PCI Leasing personnel, we are still maintaining good credit dealings with them as they continue to finance our requirements as needed."

Manuel L. Basa
Proprietor
MLB ENTERPRISE
Cagayan de Oro

"PCI Leasing and Finance, Inc.'s leasing services is the easiest way to acquire equipment you needed with minimum capital outlay. It lightens up the burden of raising funds and a welcome relief when you needed it most."

Dr. Lorendo R. Espinosa
President
MINDANAO MEDICAL CENTER
Davao

"PCI Leasing is a dynamic financial institution which tailor fits its services to the needs of its clientele. In our case at The Doctors' Hospital, Inc., PCI Leasing has been an invaluable partner since July 16, 1997, helps us realize our Corporate Mission & Vision of giving the highest quality service to the people we serve."

George G. Abueg
Hospital Administrator
THE DOCTORS' HOSPITAL, INC.
Iloilo

"Our Transport Business would not have grown if not for the unconditional support that PCI Leasing had given us. Doing business with PCI Leasing is hassle-free. *Isang tawag lang* and everything is into motion. After a few weeks we are immediately informed of management's approval of our loan request. While there are a lot of leasing and financing companies offering us their services, PCI Leasing is always our benchmark, and they have not matched the services and accommodation accorded to us by PCI Leasing since April 1999. Thus, before we even think of dealing with other financial institutions, foremost in our mind shall always be PCI Leasing."

Joel P. Guillermo
President & CEO
JOEL & SONS CORP./
ROYAL CLASS TRADING AND TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Dagupan

"During the ten years that we have been a consistent client, you have contributed a great deal to our corporation by offering quality service and corporate credibility. Way back in 1996, we were able to purchase all the equipment needed by our company worthy of becoming a part of your growth. And for that, we are thankful for the support and trust. Doing business with you has been a genuine pleasure."

Jerome C. Lee
Proprietor
SIX-IN-ONE CORPORATION
San Pablo

"Before we were granted business expansion by PCI Leasing some of our dreams seemed unattainable. But two years ago, we have experienced another abundant blessing from the Lord when the people from PCI Leasing believed in our capability and sincerity by granting us financial assistance and in one way or another, moral support in our endeavors. Now, Dairyman Ice Cream is already in its process of innovation. Our aspirations, which we once presumed unachievable are now becoming a reality."

Mr. & Mrs. Antonio R. Agustin
Owners
DAIRYMAN ICE CREAM COMPANY
Angeles

"It helps to have a partner in the growing years of business and PCI Leasing and Finance, Inc. sure fulfills this role with us."

TANZA FAMILY GENERAL HOSPITAL
Cavite

Leading the Philippines

Expanding Horizons

In line with the decentralization program of GMA, PCI Leasing supports the growth of businesses in the countryside. Expanding horizons, moving throughout the nation, PCI Leasing aims for 50% Manila - 50% provincial account booking distribution from the current 70%-30% ratio.

PCI Leasing brings industry leasing & financing to the provinces. Branches will be unified and since provincial Equitable PCI Bank branches far outnumber Metro Manila branches, they will be tapped to seize the great opportunity to service rural Philippines. ■

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(075)515-3094
Fax No. (075)522-2549

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Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City
Trunkline: 635-6416
Fax Nos.: 635-5811
635-3898

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Dasmarinas Techno-Park Branch
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Dasmarinas, Cavite
Tel Nos. (02)529-8120
(046)852-2057
Fax No. (02)529-8121

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2nd Flr. EPCIBank Bldg.
Valeria Branch, Iloilo City
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(033)336-3781
Fax No. (033)335-027

CEBU BRANCH
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(032)232-3603
Fax No. (032)-231-6282

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Lapasan, Cagayan de Oro City
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Fax No. (049)562-4789

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Cor. Bangoy Sts., Sta. Ana
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(082)221-6980
Fax No. (082)226-2851

PCI LEASING & FINANCE, INC.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

LEASING PRODUCTS

- **Direct Lease** - PCI Leasing purchases an asset selected by a client from a supplier and leases it to the said client.
- **Sale and Leaseback** - PCI Leasing purchases an existing asset of client based on an appraised value. The company then "leases back" the asset to the client.

FINANCING PRODUCTS

- **Amortized Commercial Loan** is a loan secured by a mortgage of client's equipment or real property.
- **Amortized Consumer Loan** is a loan secured by a mortgage of client's personal or real property.
- **Installment Papers Purchased** is a product whereby PCI Leasing purchases on a "with-recourse basis" the installment sales contracts over one year of a client engaged in motor vehicles, appliance or equipment dealership at a stipulated discount.
- **Receivables Purchased** is a product whereby PCI Leasing purchases on a "with-recourse basis", a client's short-term receivables at a stipulated discount.
- **Factored Receivables** is a product whereby PCI Leasing purchases client's local short-term receivables on a "with-recourse basis".